MILF chief: All with firearms must fight to the death

Story on PAGE A2

Militants avoid clash with cops, boycott Edsa

By Agnes E. Donato

IF members of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan were conspicuous by their absence at yesterday's anniversary of People Power I, it was because they were fed up with clashing with police and being forcibly dispersed.

"We decided to boycott today's Edsa rites to protest the repeated mockery

MILITANTS/ A18

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Tiglao has upper hand in Malacanang turf war

By Carlito Pablo

ABANGAN ANG GIYERA PATANI SA MALACAÑANG

PRESIDENTIAL Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao is putting up his own team in Malacañang amid questions regarding the extent of his new powers.

TIGLAO/ A18

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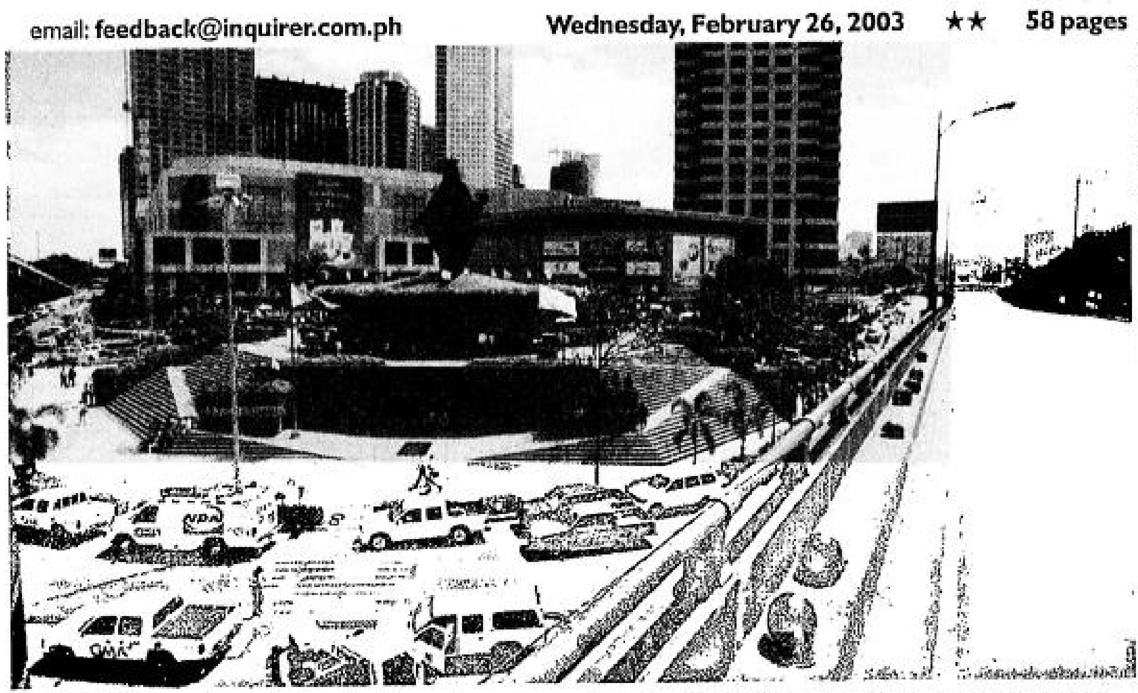

WHEREVER people as in People Power have gone, they are not at the Edsa Shrine on Tuesday to celebrate the 17th anniversary of their unprecedented, stunning triumph over the despotic Marcos regime that inspired oppressed people around the world to unshackle the chains of . tyranny. DENNIS SABANGAN

THE WARM bodies of the militant Sanlakas group marching from Cubao in Quezon City might have filled up the spaces and filled in the blanks at the Edsa Shrine but were they blocked by anti-riot police in front of Camp Crame on Edsa. Blocking forces were also deployed at White Plains and Corinthian Gardens. JOAN BONDOC

Where are the people?

FVR hits leaders for forgetting Edsa revolt

By Alcuin Papa and Armand N. Nocum

IMAGINE a celebration of People Power I without people.

The sparse attendance at yesterday's 17th anniversary of the 1986 civilian-backed revolt that toppled the strongman Ferdinand Marcos was so obvious that reporters covering the activities rightly observed there were more police, street vendors and members of the media around.

An annoyed Fidel Ramos was moved to criticize the Macapagal administration's "so disappointing" preparations for the anniversary of the event that saw hundreds of thousands of people blocking Marcos' tanks.

"*Halos walang tao* (There was hardly anyone)," Ramos, a key player of the uprising, told reporters at the Club Filipino after attending the morning flag-raising at the People Power monument on Edsa.

"*Sayang* (Too bad)," he said, pointing out that "compared to other celebrations in previous years," yesterday's attendance was "minimal, almost zero."

"Maybe next year it might be really zero," warned the former

WHERE/ A18

THE GANG'S all here, but where's everyone else, the people who made the Edsa bloodless revolt possible? From right, President Macapagal, former President Aquino, Vice President Guingona, former President Ramos and Senate President Drilon. JOAN BONDOC

Aquino, Diokno cells now a shrine to heroism

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

FORT MAGSAYSAY, Nueva Ecija—"Let this shrine be a memorial to life, not death; peace, not war; and faith in the Filipino, not in the United States."

Thus spoke Carmen Diokno, widow of Sen. Jose W. Diokno, in her response after the inauguration on Tuesday afternoon of the Aquino-Diokno National Shrine here.

The shrine was the reconstructed detention cell of Diokno and murdered Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. at the Army camp here. The building used to be the Philippine Army's intelligence service office, and is located

AQUINO/ A18

Reyes for putting GIs on hold

By Norman Bordadora

UNLESS the exact role of US forces can be determined, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes would rather put their deployment to Sulu on hold.

Americans cannot engage in "offensive combat operations" on Philippine soil, Reyes told a news conference in Honolulu yesterday after meeting with Adm. Thomas Fargo, commander of US forces in the Pacific.

"We say that we would rather hold deployment in connection with Balikatan 03-1 until after the final agreement on exactly the size and shape is reached," Reyes said.

In Manila, US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone said the United States had no intention of violating the Philippine Constitution while its forces were in the country.

"The US respects the Constitution of the Philippines. You are our ally, for heaven's sake," Ricciardone said in a radio interview.

"We would not violate your laws or your Constitution. If we come, we come as invited allies working under your law, your rules and your commanders' lead. We will not come in as alien invaders," he said.

Before leaving for Washington to meet with US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Reyes told reporters the Philippines needs more US military help to quell Muslim ex- tremists in parts of Mindanao, but said any operation

REYES/ A19

Saddam refuses to destroy missiles

BUOYED by the anti-war sentiment worldwide, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Monday indicated he did not intend to follow UN orders to destroy his Al-Samoud 2 missiles. In a three-hour interview with CBS television, Saddam also challenged US President George W. Bush to an internationally televised debate via satellite linkup.

At the United Nations, a new US-backed resolution declaring that Iraq missed its chance to disarm has set the stage for a showdown in the polarized UN Security Council on whether to give the green light for war or allow more time for inspections.

The one-page draft resolution, submitted Monday by the United States and Britain, did not set any deadlines. But officials made clear they wanted the Security Council to decide by the second week of March "that Iraq has failed to take the final opportunity afforded to it in Resolution 1441," which was adopted unanimously by the council last Nov. 8.

France and Germany, however. came out strongly against the draft and circulated a counterproposal seeking to extend UN inspections for at least four months.

•SADDAM/ A19

'All with firearms must fight till death'

By Edwin O. Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Two weeks after a military offensive drove him out of the Buliok complex in Central Mindanao, Salamat Hashim surfaced on Monday night with a radio message to his followers: "Fight till death."

Salamat followed up his call to arms with a reminder: "I would like to tell you my people that there is no ceasefire right now, there are no peace talks," he said.

The chair of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front said lives were lost, thousands were displaced, and property was destroyed when the government attacked MILF-held villages in Pikit, North Cotabato and nearby areas "despite an existing ceasefire agreement."

"We are pushed to the wall, we have to fight back," the 61-year-old leader said. "All who have firearms must fight till death." The MILF, the largest Moro separatist group in the country, has an estimated 12,500 regular members.

Thirteen people have died in new clashes between the government and the MILF in the last two days.

Salamat aired a 30-minute recorded message in the vernacular over "Swara Mindanao" (Voice of Mindanao), a nightly program of the University of Mindanao radio station dxCM in this city. "We have to die in order to attain independence for the Bangsamoro people," he said.

The Egyptian-educated Moro leader began his message to

WE/ A19

SALAMAT Hashim: There's no ceasefire, there are no peace talks right now. PDI PHOTO FILE

Gas to cost ₱26 per liter once US-Iraq war erupts

By Ronnel W. Domingo

GASOLINE may cost at least P26 per liter and will likely be rationed if the United States invades Iraq, energy and oil officials said yesterday.

An executive of Petron Corp. said the price of gasoline would go up by at least P6 per liter if Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's prediction on crude prices was proven correct.

Mahathir, who opposes a US attack on Iraq, warned on Feb. 20 that crude oil could shoot up to $50 per barrel in case a shooting war erupted in the Middle East.

Virginia Ruivivar, Petron's corporate communications manager, said pump prices for diesel could go up to P22 from the current P16 per liter.

GAS/ A19

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The Eastern section of Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/26/03

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Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

US envoy: Solons benefited from Agile

By Norman Bordadora

THE UNITED States-funded Accelerating Growth Investment and Liberalization with Equity, which has been drawing flak from a number of senators for allegedly interfering in government policymaking, has actually benefited some of the senators themselves, US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone said yesterday.

Far from being the lobby group that some senators alleged it to be, Agile was a service group involved in technology and skills transfer, Ricciardone said in a radio interview.

He said Agile was a group that had been set up through the cooperation of the United States and the Philippines, "directed by your government and serves any of your government organizations that need technical assistance."

"And that includes, by the way, members of the Senate, including some of those who have been speaking against it. They have been beneficiaries in the past," he added.

As US ambassador, Ricciardone said he was proud of what the US-funded program was doing for development in the Philippines.

He said this included providing comparative data on world-class banking and financial systems.

"Agile has supported Filipino experts in getting world standards of good government and technical assistance brought to them here in so many different areas. It's too bad, I guess, that so many people are critical," Ricciardone said.

Some legislators have been agitated over Agile's supposed interference in the country's affairs, accusing the group of lobbying in the Senate for amendments to be written into the Anti-Money Laundering Act to comply with the standards set by the international watchdog body on money laundering.

Ricciardone confirmed that Agile was indeed working for amendments to be made on the Amla that would be acceptable to the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force.

"What makes this report persistent is that they are partly true. We have an interest in good government and we're going to keep preaching good government around the world relentlessly," Ricciardone said.

Congress said, meanwhile, that it may not need to go through the tedious task of amending the Amla yet again by working on the consolidated congressional report that it would just have to ratify again.

This developed after it was learned that the FATF had not yet given an official reaction to the bicameral conference committee report that Congress ratified on Feb.13, and which it has since reconsidered.

"Nothing was rejected," Manila Rep. Jaime Lopez, head of the House bicameral panel that tackled the amendments, said yesterday.

"There's a good chance then the bicameral conference committee report would be acceptable to the FATF," he said.

In a phone interview, Lopez said the central bank governor, Rafael Buenaventura, who heads the Anti Money Laundering Council, had submitted the bicameral conference committee report to the FATF on Feb. 21.

He said there had been some apparent miscommunication so that finance officials had the misimpression that the bicameral report that Congress ratified last Feb.13 had been rejected by the FATF.

Lopez explained that this was because Congress had failed to meet the Feb.12 deadline given by the FATF for it to approve an amendatory bill that would be FATF-compliant.

This move would allow Congress to reconvene the bicameral conference committee and make the necessary amendments rather than go through the tedious and lengthier process of filing another amendatory bill to the Amla. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

GMA prayer was not political, group says

"SOCIAL graces" and the "open invitation" allowed some politicians, including President Macapagal-Arroyo, to be onstage during Sunday's massive prayer rally at the Luneta grandstand in Manila.

Members of the Bangon Pilipino Movement, the new political watchdog that organized the rally, maintained yesterday that the presence and statements of the President did not politicize the gathering, as alleged by the Iglesia ni Cristo.

Alex Aguilar, spokesperson of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines and one of the emcees during the program, said Bangon would never allow itself to be used for partisan politics.

Aguilar told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that the politician-guests were told beforehand that they could not speak onstage. "But we did not want to be rude," he said. "We could not let go of the social graces."

The INC lambasted Ms Macapagal yesterday for delivering a "political speech in the guise of prayer" during the rally, and threatened to pull out of the movement.

Business leaders in Bangon Pilipino remained diplomatic, saying they would hold a dialogue with the INC.

"It was an open invitation to everyone, including the highest official of the land," said Miguel Varela, chairman emeritus of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "(And) she joined us."

Donald Dee, president of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, insisted that Ms Macapagal made no political statements. As it was, he said, the President's prayer was already a departure from her earlier hard-line support of the United States. *Blanche S. Rivera with Norman Bordadora*

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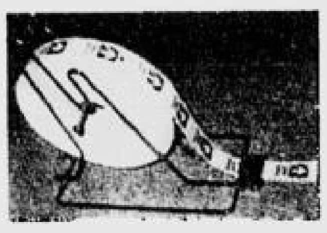

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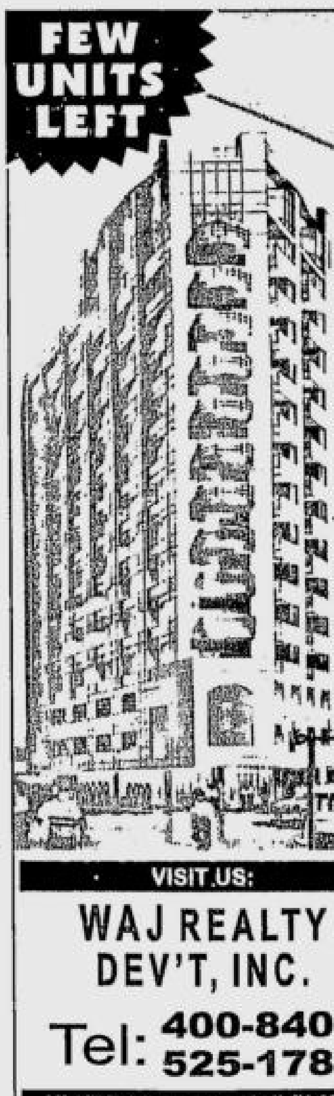

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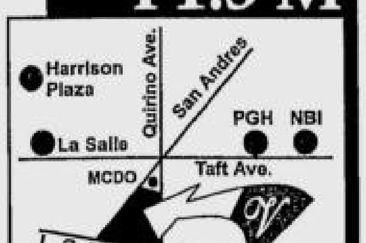

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School-burnings terrify Zamboanga del Norte residents

KALAWIT, Zamboanga del Norte—A group of unidentified armed men burned down a school in the neighboring town of Cutalad early Monday further agitating the terrified residents of this town and of other municipalities still reeling from the horror of the massacre that left 14 dead in Sitio Tubod, Barangay Poblacion here last week.

Authorities blamed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front for the incident, which reminded residents here of the infamous raid on the town of Ipil in what is now Zamboanga de Sibugay province in 1995.

Witnesses said the group of armed men, who introduced themselves as soldiers, herded them into the community center before proceeding to raze the school.

The burning of the school in Cutalad forced the Department of Education in Zamboanga del Norte to suspend classes because children have refused to go to school.

Teodoro Tionglay, Zamboanga del Norte assistant schools division superintendent, said teachers were also forced to suspend classes in six other schools in the province because pupils simply did not show up.

In Lapason town, the residents' fear of MILF atrocities drove school officials to suspend classes in three schools, Tionglay said.

In a related development, an Army detachment in Sirawai town reported being harassed by armed men on Monday.

No one was injured in the attack but military officials said it could be part of the MILF counter-offensive following the military's capture of the rebels' Builiok complex in Central Mindanao.

Meanwhile, military officials said yesterday they were still verifying reports that one of three Indonesians abducted by the Abu Sayyaf last year had died from an unspecified illness.

Brig. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, deputy chief of the Southern Command, said there were some doubts about the veracity of the report.

"We received reports from the field that one of the Indonesians died. We are verifying the report and we hope it's not true," Tolentino had told reporters.

The three Indonesians—Wuntu Jacobus Winowata, Julkifli and Pieter Lerrich—were seized off a barge in Luuk, Sulu, on June 17, 2002 by suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits.

The military said that they did not know which of the three Indonesians had died. *Lullie A. Micabalo, PDI Mindanao Bureau, with reports from Martin P. Marfil and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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7 soldiers, 5 Reds slain in two clashes

SEVEN soldiers, including an officer, and five communist guerrillas were slain in scattered clashes between government forces and rebels in different parts of the country Tuesday, military officials said.

Seven soldiers, including an army captain and one guerrilla leader, were killed in a gunbattle in Tapaz town, Capiz on Monday, regional military chief Maj. Gen. Jacinto Ligot said.

Six firearms were lost to the communist New People's Army (NPA) in the battle, the general said, adding that troops were pursuing the attackers.

Four NPA rebels were slain and five rifles recovered in another encounter with army troops outside Ligao City in Albay province, said regional military spokesman Capt. Domingo Maceda.

Maceda said the soldiers also recovered a list of police officers and civilians who were apparently targeted for assassination.

The 9,000-strong NPA is the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which has been tagged a terrorist organization by the United States and other western nations.

Earlier this month, the government told the communist rebels it would work to have the terror tag removed only if both sides resumed peace negotiations and made substantial progress in the talks. *AFP*

Higher debt payments in budget alarms solon

By Cynthia D. Balana

SENATE President Franklin Drilon yesterday expressed alarm over the increased appropriations for debt service payments and personal services in the 2003 national budget to the detriment of badly needed social and physical infrastructure.

Drilon said the increase in these mandatory expenditures has effectively crowded out expenditures for social services.

This observation was shared by Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin in a recent meeting with him, Drilon said.

On Monday, the Senate committee on finance chaired by Sen. Manny Villar submitted for plenary debate a "survival budget" of P804.04 billion for 2003. The budget was P160 million less than the P804.2 billion proposed by Malacañang and lower by P1.2 billion than the version approved by the House of Representatives.

Of the amount, about P223 billion will go to debt servicing.

Villar said the cut came about because of the revised fiscal targets presented by the Development Budget Coordinating Committee for 2003, and took into consideration the various external and internal concerns such as the impact of a possible war in Iraq on the economy, inflation and the ballooning budget deficit.

Drilon noted that interest payments as a percentage of the total budget had increased dramatically over the past three years.

"In 2001, interest payments reached 24.6 percent of expenditures. For 2003, 28 percent, or P223 billion, of the total budget is appropriated for debt service payments," he said.

Drilon is concerned that debt servicing now constitutes the second largest component of the national budget while personal services comprises the biggest component.

Personal services expenditures now account for P275 billion or 34 percent of the total budget.

"We are dismayed that there is little room for expenditures in our budget this year which would provide for urgent physical and social infrastructures needed to stimulate the economy because of mandatory interest payments and a bloated bureaucracy," the Senate President said.

Drilon noted that the productive portion of the budget was less than 50 percent of the total appropriation. The legislature was given very limited flexibility to provide projects to stimulate the economy.

With the very limited funds available, he said the Senate would fashion a budget that would ensure the judicious use of meager resources for the delivery of basic services and ensure economic growth.

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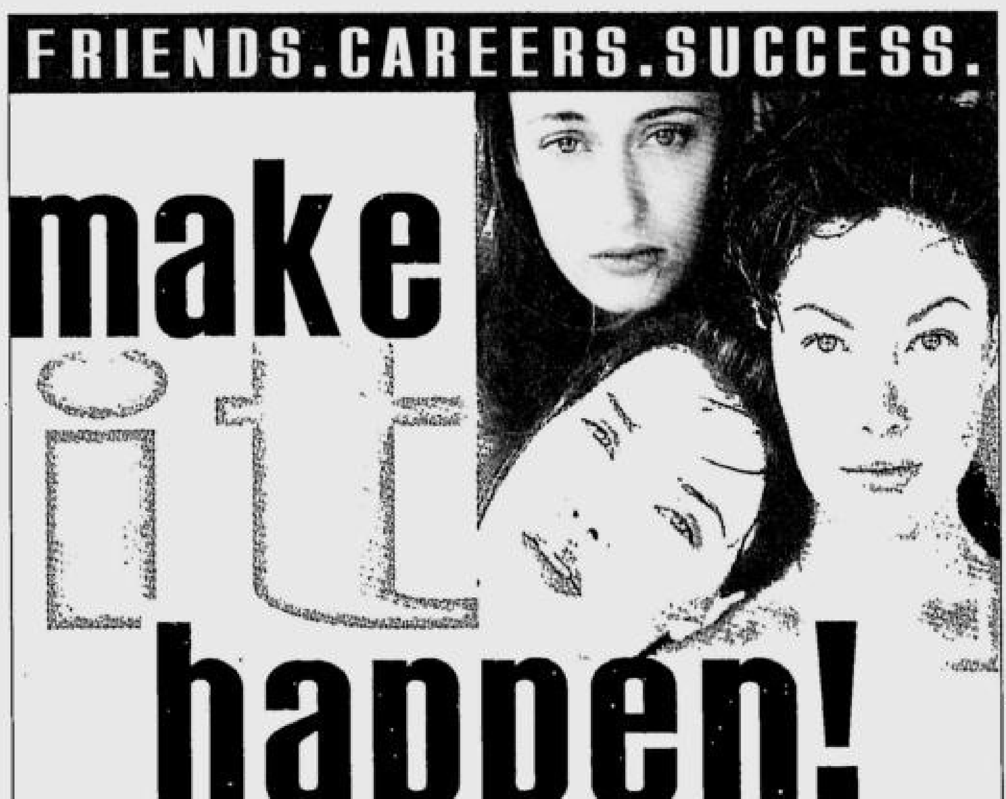

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Enough rice for RP seen

SAN FERNANDO CITY—For the last 16 months of the Macapagal administration, the country will enjoy sufficiency in rice and not have to import the staple, said Agriculture Undersecretary Celestino Martinez Jr.

Martinez said the administration has set aside P430 million for a rice program expected to benefit the country's rice farmers.

Martinez was guest of honor at the opening Monday of the La Union Agro-Industrial Trade Fair, highlight of the 153rd founding anniversary of La Union.

He said most of the money would go toward the purchase of certified hybrid seeds and fertilizer. The program will be undertaken in cooperation with local governments, he said.

What he did not say was, with an expected bumper crop, whether the country would be exporting the commodity.

The Philippines has been importing its rice from its Asian neighbors, particularly Thailand and India.

The National Food Authority in San Juan, La Union, said the country is expected to import 800,000 metric tons of rice from Thailand and India this year, with the Ilocos region buying 2.1 million bags.

The Department of Agriculture has kept a hands-off policy on rice importation as the government transferred the function of importing some 400,000 metric tons to accredited farmer's cooperatives.

Because of the limited budget, the administration has reduced its food projects to six, Martinez said. These are in rice, corn, coffee, bananas and fish. *Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Napocor must ensure workers' benefits—Oreta

SOME 8,000 National Power Corp. employees facing retrenchment should get their separation and retirement benefits as soon as they get their "pink slips" at the end of the month, Sen. Teresa Aquino Oreta said yesterday.

Napocor officials should guarantee that funds are available before then, Oreta said.

It was the least the state-owned power firm could do to help the workers cope with the economic slump and high unemployment rate that could be aggravated by a US-Iraq war, she added.

Under the reorganization plan—designed for Napocor to comply with the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) or Republic Act 9136—only 3,700 workers will be rehired by the spin-off company, National Transmission Co. (Transco).

Epira requires industry players to "structurally and functionally unbundle" or separate their activities into the major services like generation, transmission distribution and supply.

Napocor's employees unions have insisted that the board decision to slash the number of employees by almost half was not the correct response to the directives.

The Napocor Employees Consolidated Union (Necu) and Napocor Employees and Workers Union (Newu) also said they were not convinced that management would ensure the prompt release of retrenchment benefits.

Over at the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), rank-and-file workers warned on Monday of a possible duplication of the "Napocor situation."

In a phone interview, Roy A. Bautista, president of the Meralco Employees and Workers Association (Mewa), said about 2,000 workers would lose their jobs if the utility firm were "broken up" to comply with Epira.

Meralco president Jesus Francisco revealed that management was inclined to keep the firm under one flag, since breaking it up would give rise to "many legal questions." *Gerald G. Lacuarta with Rommel W. Domingo*

'Senate will come around on Cha-cha'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WESTERN Samar Rep. Eduardo Nachura yesterday said he was certain the Senate would approve a House concurrent resolution calling on the two chambers to sit as a constituent assembly to amend the 1987 Charter.

"I refuse to accept a deadlock. I am certain the Senate will crumble to the House position," Nachura said after Iloilo Rep. Arthur Defensor said the House should agree to a constitutional convention to break the impasse in the Charter change move.

Defensor, who was defending the convention mode, noted that 14 of the 21 senators were in favor of a convention, while the House was certain to approve the assembly route.

Nachura chairs the House committee on constitutional amendments which is sponsoring the floor deliberations on the assembly resolution.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., main proponent of Cha-cha in the House, expressed the same optimism.

"There's a possibility the Senate will agree to a constituent assembly," he said.

De Venecia confirmed Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's reported statement that the Senate had agreed to convene a panel immediately to discuss what mode to take.

On Monday, civil society and multisectoral groups held a "people's summit on constitutional reform" and adopted a resolution calling for Cha-cha through a constituent assembly.

Close to 700 delegates from the basic sectors of women, urban poor, farmers and fisherfolk, as well as retired generals and representatives of civil society, the academe, business and religious sectors, attended the pro-Cha-cha summit. It was organized by the Consultative Group for Constitutional Reform and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

"Conscious of our people's growing clamor for real autonomy and civic participation and aware of the importance of increasing stakeholders in our republic, we support the adoption of a federal system of government to be in place not later than 2010," they said.

Marietta Goco, lead convenor, said "regardless of the mode," the multisectoral groups hankered for changes in the Constitution to solve the country's many problems.

De Venecia said the House was expected to approve within the next 10 to 15 days "or earlier" the resolution calling on the Senate and the House to convene as a constituent assembly.

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Erap lawyers block 'Boracay' inspection

LAWYERS of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada continue to oppose a prosecution motion for the court to go on an ocular inspection of the "Boracay" mansion despite the consent of its supposed owner, Estrada's former housing adviser Jose Luis Yulo.

In a pleading yesterday, the defense lawyers said the Sandiganbayan would only cater to the "publicity seekers" in the prosecution if it allowed the inspection.

They maintained the New Manila property could not be used as evidence in the economic plunder case against Estrada as it was not even mentioned in the formal charge.

They said that holding a hearing at the mansion would not support allegations that the mansion had been purchased using P142 million from the "Jose Velarde" account, the secret account allegedly owned by Estrada to hide the wealth that he had allegedly acquired illegally.

Yulo, who heads the St. Peter Holdings company laying claim to "Boracay," wrote the Sandiganbayan last week saying he had "no objection" to the state prosecutors inspecting the property.

Estrada's court-appointed lawyers said Yulo's letter should not be given weight as it did not clearly indicate "in what capacity" he was giving the approval.

The letter dated Feb. 18 was simply signed "Jose Luis J. Yulo."

"On the other hand, had Yulo stated that he is representing St. Peter Holdings in whose name the Torrens title (of Boracay) is registered, all the more that there is no relevance or pertinence " in conducting the inspection," said Estrada lawyer Manuel Pamaran in his opposition.

"It is certainly an exercise in futility which is not only a waste of time and effort but a cause of unnecessary inconvenience to everybody, especially to the court," he stressed. *Volt Contreras*

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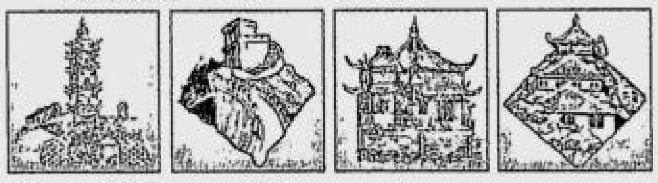

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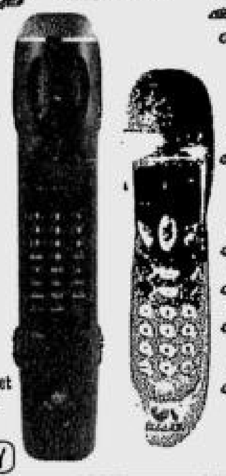

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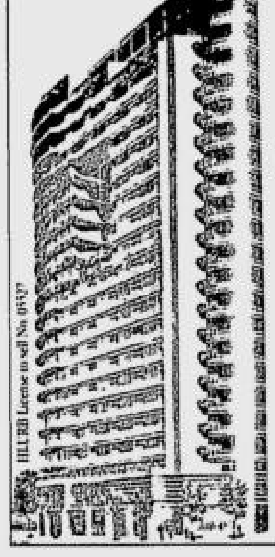

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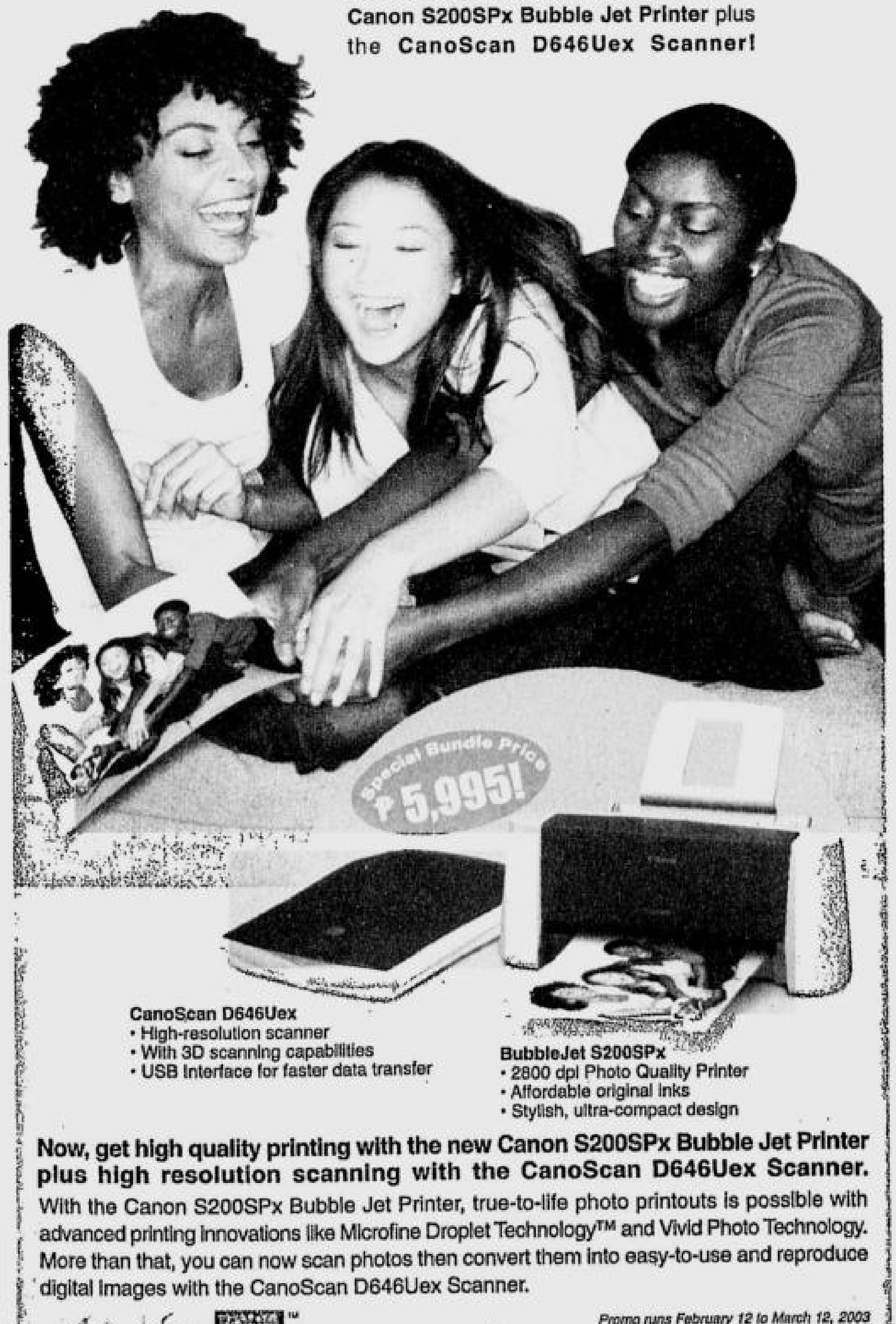

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Tesda's Liban raps labor secretary for 'siding with syndicates'

EMBATTLED Technical Education and Skills Development Authority chief Dante Liban yesterday accused Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas of "taking the side of the syndicates" allegedly operating in the entertainment industry when she sought his replacement.

Liban said Sto. Tomas' recommendation to President Macapagal-Arroyo that he be fired preempted the National Bureau of Investigation probe of alleged irregularities in the issuance of artist record books (ARBs).

He said all he has done at Tesda is "correct" the system that had jeopardized young Filipinas who had wanted to go abroad as entertainers but ended up working as prostitutes.

"I have my moral obligations to God and country," he said in a statement yesterday. "I expect no less from every government official, especially the woman secretary of DOLE."

For a fee, the syndicates that reportedly control testing of entertaining at Tesda would issue an applicant an ARB whether they were deserving or not.

Liban pointed out that under his administration, the passing rate of talents at Tesda dropped from 95 percent to 55 percent.

In another development, the head of a committee investigating Liban resigned from the Tesda executive board yesterday, saying he could no longer work with Liban.

In a letter to President Macapagal, Isidro Antonio Asper, a member of the 12-member board since 1994, said he had "lost trust and confidence" in Liban's ability to head the agency.

But he admitted responsibility for failing, as chair of the Tesda board's resource generation and utilization committee, to monitor the alleged irregularities under Liban. *Blanche S. Rivera*

No such question, bishop says

LEGAZPI CITY—The bishop of Legazpi said yesterday it was "absolutely not true" that he had instructed priests to ask brides-to-be if they were pregnant before they would be allowed to marry.

Bishop Jose C. Sorra said nowhere did the question appear in the pastoral letter he had issued on Feb. 10, which was intended to be given as part of the catechesis to parties contracting marriage.

The letter, read at all masses in the Bicol diocese last Sunday, was the subject of a front-page story in the INQUIRER yesterday.

Sorra clarified that he had specifically referred to "brides who are conspicuously pregnant."

The bishop said: "Practical prudence dictates that no one may ask the bride if she is one, two or three months pregnant." He said the matter should be "between the bride and her conscience," although it could also be the subject of sacramental confession, "one of the requirements preparatory to canonical marriage." *Floreno G. Solmirano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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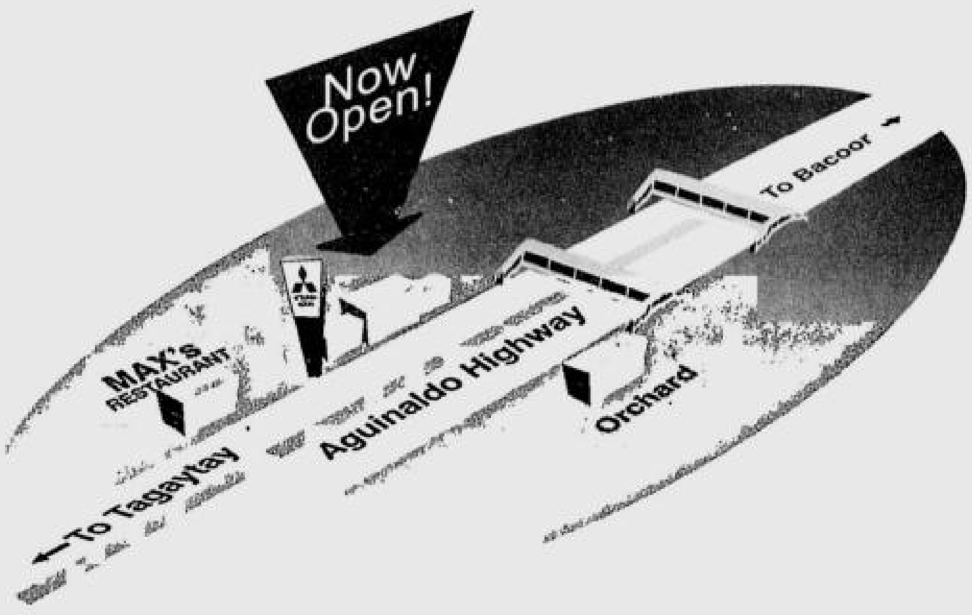

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Nani seeks contempt rap vs Rama

By Michael Lim Ubac

PALACE graftbuster Dario Rama is not only "ignorant of the law," he also has no respect for the authority of the judiciary, particularly the Court of Appeals, according to former Justice Secretary Hernando "Nani" Perez.

Perez has asked the CA to cite Rama for contempt for "gross disrespect of the authority of the appellate court to dispense justice."

In a supplemental petition dated Feb. 20, Perez asked the appellate court's 5th Division to castigate Rama for going ahead and resolving the administrative complaint against him despite a temporary restraining order issued by the court on Feb. 4.

He also asked the court to nullify the actions of Rama who had found Perez administratively liable for issuing a memorandum barring the disclosure of travel records of certain government officials.

On Dec. 19, Rama charged Perez with violation of two constitutional provisions, including the policy of full public disclosure, and three other laws in connection with the memorandum that the then justice secretary issued last year.

The chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission said Perez also violated Republic Act 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees and the Administrative Code of 1987.

The CA, acting on a petition filed by Perez, issued the TRO to stop the PAGC from proceeding with its investigation of Perez for supposedly preventing Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo from divulging the travel records of the President, Vice President, Cabinet members and lawmakers.

Rama admitted to the CA on Feb. 14 that the commission had already prepared a resolution on the case that was set to be transmitted to the President.

Perez claimed the policy of full public disclosure was not absolute as "there are restrictions" like threats of terrorism.

Perez also denounced Rama for acting as a "prosecutor, as a complainant and will act as a judge."

In his petition, Perez said it was "improper" and a "gross disrespect" on the part of Rama and PAGC Commissioners Teresita Baltazar and Imelda Dangoy to have ruled on the administrative case.

He said the CA injunction covered not just the PAGC proceedings but also the respondents (Rama, Baltazar and Dangoy).

"It is quite obvious the respondents disregarded whatever respect the (appellate court) is entitled to," he said.

Perez then accused Rama et al of committing indirect contempt under Rule 71, Section 23 (e) and (d) of the Revised Rules of Court.

"The refusal of the respondents to accord this honorable court with that degree of respect necessary to maintain its integrity is reason enough to find them guilty of contempt," he said.

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Malacañang backs prosecutor vs judge

MALACAÑANG has cleared a state prosecutor of liability in the filing of child abuse charges against a Caloocan City judge in 1999.

In a 12-page resolution, the Office of the President through Acting Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs Manuel Gaite dismissed "for lack of merit" the administrative case against State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, son of former National Bureau of Investigation Director Epimaco Velasco.

"The records reveal no prima facie basis for charging (Velasco) with misconduct in office and other administrative offenses," Gaite said.

"Accordingly, we do not believe that (Velasco) should be held accountable for his resolution dated June 20, 1999, which on its face was valid and lawful," he added.

Charges

Caloocan Judge Adoracion Angeles had charged Velasco with gross ignorance of the law, gross misconduct, incompetence, partiality and manifest bad faith after Velasco decided to file child abuse charges against her in June 1999.

The charges had been brought to the state prosecutor's attention by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and ABS-CBN's Bantay Bata Foundation.

Velasco had found probable cause to charge the judge with maltreating the victim, then 13 years old in 1999.

Aggrieved, Angeles managed to have the resolution reversed through the intercession of higher-ups in the justice department.

Angeles then slapped Velasco with an administrative case, alleging the latter had "acted with undisguised partiality toward (the 13-year-old) by giving more weight to the diary of the girl which allegedly chronicled [the] acts of abuse."

Ignored evidence

She claimed that Velasco totally ignored her evidence, which would have belied all allegations imputed against her."

On June 6, 2001, then Justice Secretary Hernando Perez dismissed the administrative complaint for lack of basis.

"Taken in the light of the evidence presented, we find that the acts complained of are within the limits of respondent's (Velasco) authority or discretion and do not constitute an administrative infraction," Perez had said.

Angeles moved for a reconsideration, but Perez denied this on April 16, 2002.

She then asked the Office of the President to reverse Perez's decision.

In his resolution, Gaite shared with the view of Perez that the reversal of Velasco's resolution "does not warrant the filing of administrative proceedings against him."

He said it must be clearly proven that Velasco was motivated by fraud, dishonesty, corruption or other ill motive. *Michael Lim Ubac*

Wanted: Bird lovers to care for these eagles

By Ryan D. Rosauro
PDI Mindanao Bureau

CUTE NAMAN KAMI, HOUSE-BROKEN PA!

OROQUIETA CITY—Wanted: surrogate parents for two birds in captivity which are in dire need of proper shelter. The birds are in the category of threatened but not endangered species and therein lies the problem.

The birds, a serpent eagle and a Brahminny kite (local name: *banog*) are currently housed in two one-square-meter cages at the Protected Area Office (PAO) compound here.

They were quite sickly when they were found but are now recuperating.

But for them to fully recover, the birds need bigger and more comfortable quarters, said Rolando Dingal, superintendent of the Mt. Malindang protected area.

Their chances of survival in their present environment is slim, Dingal said.

Not endangered

The birds cannot be transferred to a government facility designed to take care of birds in captivity because they are not on the endangered list, he said.

"Only endangered animals are priority tenants in such types of conservation facilities," Dingal said.

But releasing them into the wild could cause them to fall into the hands of poachers. They have become even more vulnerable now that they have become used to humans, said Dingal.

The serpent eagle was caught last month and was brought to the PAO compound. The Brahminny Kite was turned over to Dingal on Feb. 14 by schoolteacher Corazon Laranjo.

Laranjo said it was her third-grade pupils who stumbled upon the Brahminny kite perched up a tree near their classroom.

Noticing its haggard look, Laranjo asked someone to capture the bird. She then went on radio to try to look for its owner but no one came forward.

The captured Brahminny kite weighs 750 grams and stands 10 inches. It is 16 inches long from head to tail and has a wingspan of 31 inches.

Saying she did not know how to care for it, Laranjo brought the bird to Dingal, who said his office did not have the capability to nurture the bird, either.

Take custody

Dingal then asked the Protected Area Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) in Cagayan de Oro City to take custody of the birds.

But the PAWB refused because it did not have the capacity to care for them, either. The same reason was given by the CARE Philippines non-government organization.

Andy Pestaño, executive director of CARE's biodiversity program in Mt. Malindang, said rearing birds in captivity requires a special expertise that "we do not have."

Providing a glimmer of hope is a 10-hectare aquamarine park now being constructed between Tudela and Sinacaban towns at a cost of about P2 million. The park will undertake conservation, aquaculture production and eco-tourism activities.

It is hoped that the park, which will include a mangrove reservation and a two-hectare wildlife sanctuary, might be able to take in the serpent eagle and the Brahminny kite when it is completed by the middle of the year.

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Private Sector

A GREATER NEED FOR AN EXPLANATION ON OVER RECOVERY

The Consumer & Oil Price Watch would like to **reinforce** its earlier appeal for the big 3 oil companies to explain their over recovery of 68 centavos for the month of February in the light of the following points:

1. Over the past six months (August 2002 to January 2003), the discrepancy between the computation of the Consumer and Oil Price Watch (COPW) and the oil companies was only **three centavos** over recovery.

   The total COPW increase for the six-month period was P1.17 while the actual increase of the oil companies was P1.20, or a minimal difference of three centavos.

	INCREASE (DECREASE)	
	COPW COMPUTATION	ACTUAL-BIG 3 OIL COMPANIES
August	0.30	0.30
September	0.39	0.39
October	0.62	0.62
November	(0.03)	(0.20)
December	(1.03)	(0.40)
January *	0.92	0.49
	1.17	1.20

- 3 centavos over recovery

* The P1.00 increase due the oil companies on account of the Clean Air Act is not included in the computation

2. However, for the month of February, the increase due the oil companies is 86 centavos but their actual increase is P1.54, resulting in an **over recovery of 68 centavos**, which they owe the consumers.

	COPW	ACTUAL
February	0.86	1.54

- 68 centavos over recovery due consumers

While it is true that deregulation works because it gives the consumer better choices, this does not answer the question of why there is a difference in the computation of over recovery.

We reiterate our request for a meeting with the Department of Energy and the oil companies so that we can reconcile our computations and use this as basis in the future.

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Unjust cause

EDITORIALS

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation was just doing its job when it charged LandBank cashier Acsa Ramirez as one of the principals in the P431-million tax diversion case, according to NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco. "We maintain that the NBI had nothing personal against Acsa when we filed the charges," Wycoco said last week after it was known that the Office of the Ombudsman had cleared Ramirez. But he added that the NBI would try to find out why Ramirez was cleared while two other LandBank officials were not although "they had the same participation."

Now Ramirez and the entire nation know what Wycoco meant. Efren Meneses, chief of the NBI's anti-fraud division, said Monday that in the next few days, the NBI would file a motion with the Ombudsman seeking reconsideration of its decision. Which could mean several more months of anxiety for the woman whose only crime was to proclaim her innocence after Wycoco and President Macapagal-Arroyo accused her publicly of being a party to the plunder of taxpayers' money. Apparently, embarrassing the President and the NBI director by showing they are wrong is a crime beyond forgiving as far as Wycoco is concerned.

Ramirez was the cashier who reported to her manager and the regional manager of the LandBank the existence of several suspicious accounts in the Binangonan branch. This led to the discovery of a series of transactions diverting P431 million, in tax payments into private hands. When the NBI invited her to shed light on the scam, she cooperated. And there at the NBI offices, the President and Wycoco paraded her in front of television cameras as one of the suspects in the multimillion-peso scam.

Since then Ramirez and her family have been living in fear, afraid the syndicate behind the scam would get back at them. She and her husband have been living in a safehouse, away from their two children whom they sent to live with her parents for their safety. She cannot move around unless accompanied by a bodyguard. And she has to put up with the threat of being locked up.

The threat of imprisonment should have been lifted from her shoulders with the Ombudsman's decision, but it seems Wycoco just can't let go of Ramirez. She says she won't seek redress for her public humiliation or the damage done to her reputation and just leave everything to God. But Wycoco won't let her do so. It's as if he had nothing better to do than persecute a woman who did her duty by reporting a crime punishable with death.

Ramirez has said she isn't expecting an apology from the President, and apparently none is coming. However the least she can do by way of making amends is to order Wycoco to stop hounding the poor woman. Better yet, she should fire Wycoco not only for putting the presidency in an awkward position but also wasting government manpower and resources in pursuing an unjust cause.

Weapon vs graft

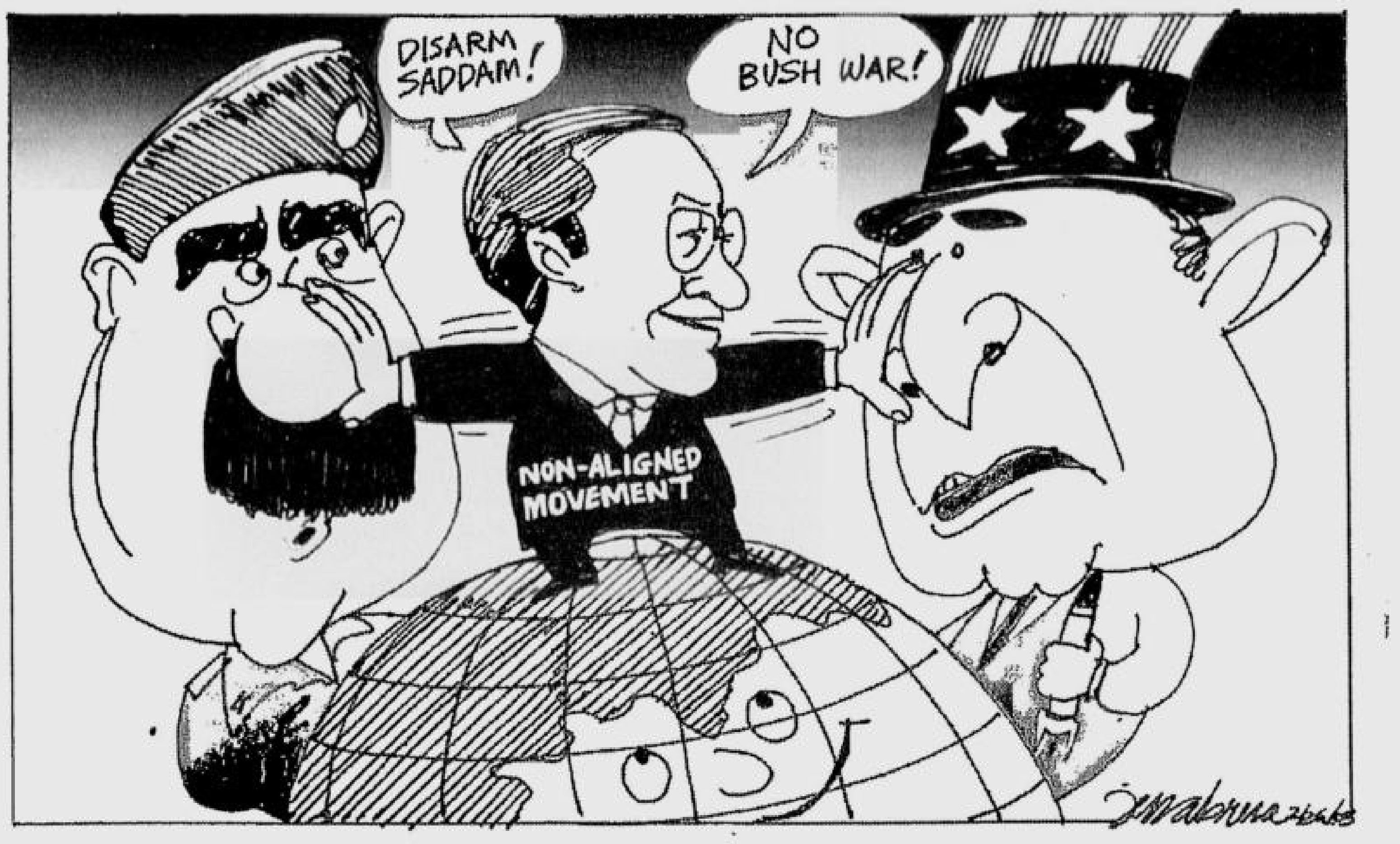
THE SUPREME Court has initiated a major reform in the electoral process by granting immunity to voters who testify that their votes have been bought. In a landmark decision, the Court allowed 44 voters in Imus, Cavite, who had admitted accepting money in exchange for their votes, to turn state witness against a mayoral candidate during the 1999 elections. The grant of immunity from criminal liability is one effective way of preventing vote-buying, the Court said in a decision written by Chief Justice Hilario Davide.

It's a wonder no one thought of it before. Vote-buying is never done in the open. The transaction is between the voter and the bribe-giver, and only a fool would do it in front of witnesses. But since both face punishment, nobody comes out to expose the crime and the law becomes useless. The result is that many elections, especially at the local level, have turned into bidding contests, with victory going to the biggest spenders—and violators of the law.

It is not only the democratic process that is compromised and "prostituted." As the Court noted, "One who commits dishonesty cannot be reasonably expected to adhere to the constitutional precept that a public office is a public trust."

More simply put, anyone who buys his way into public office is bound to be corrupt. Thus, by making it easier to prosecute candidates who buy votes, the Court has struck at one of the roots of corruption.

With this doctrine the Court might have given the Office of the Ombudsman a powerful tool to go after grafters. The Ombudsman should test it by offering immunity to those who have given bribes to clinch government contracts or secure favorable decisions from government officials.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Is the Absentee Voting Law unconstitutional?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IS the Absentee Voting Law constitutional or not? It is, said Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday. It is not, said election expert lawyer Romulo Makalintal.

Some senators, notably Sen. Joker Arroyo, said the same thing—that it is unconstitutional—during the debates in the Senate. But the majority of the senators still approved it and the President signed it into law. So Makalintal filed a petition with the Supreme Court to have it declared unconstitutional.

At the Kapihan, Pimentel and Makalintal argued back and forth on the law's constitutionality.

The Constitution says in clear and positive language that "suffrage may be exercised by Filipinos.... who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year and in the place wherein they propose to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the election."

Filipinos who are temporarily living abroad such as overseas Filipino workers and others who work, visit or study are qualified to vote as absentee voters because their stay abroad is temporary. They have homes and families here.

However, Filipinos who are permanent residents of a foreign country, like green card holders in the United States, are a different matter. They cannot qualify as absentee voters, according to Arroyo and Makalintal. "They have sworn under oath under the laws of their host country that they will permanently live in that country. Thus, they have homes and families there."

Congress tried to cure that by providing that a permanent resident can be allowed to vote "if he executes an affidavit at the time he registers that he shall return to the Philippines and live there permanently within three years."

That does not solve the problem, said Arroyo and Makalintal. What is required of a voter is that he "shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year immediately preceding the election." In plain language, Arroyo explained, "the voter must live in the Philippines a year **before** the election, not **after** the election.

The promise to live here permanently, Arroyo said, "underscores the fact that the voter is not an actual resident of the Philippines and therefore ineligible to vote."

And what, Makalintal asked, if the voter does not fulfill his promise to return and live here permanently within three years? That nullifies his vote, *di ba*? Suppose a senatorial candidate wins by 10,000 votes over his nearest rival. And suppose 11,000 green card holders who voted for him do not return here within three years, will his votes be nullified and his proclamation recalled? Because these 11,000 votes are clearly void.

No, the votes will not be nullified and the senator will not be unseated, replied Pimentel. What will happen is that the voters with the unfulfilled promises will not be allowed to vote again but the results of the elections stay.

Do you agree to that? Do you think that is fair?

What if that happens to the presidential race? We would have a President who was not elected by enough qualified voters.

Refuting the unconstitutionality argument, Pimentel said that the Constitution also provides that Congress should enact a law to allow Filipinos living abroad to vote in Philippine elections. That's what we did, enact such a law.

Makalintal replied that the law Congress passed is defective. In a precedent-setting case, the Supreme Court had ruled that a green card holder in the United States is not a resident Filipino, he said.

That case does not apply to the Absentee Voting Law, argued Pimentel. The residential requirement provided by the Constitution applies to domestic voters, he said. We are talking here of Filipino voters overseas. We passed a law that applies only to them. This is an entirely new ball game.

But can the Commission on Elections safeguard the millions of votes coming from overseas when it cannot safeguard the votes coming from a neighboring municipality only a few kilometers away? And will the Comelec be provided with enough funds to do what it is required to do? Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos had revealed that not a single centavo of the budget for the so-called election "modernization" has been released. Neither has it decided what voting machine to buy. The Philippines will need thousands and thousands of these machines for the voting precincts. It will take time to manufacture these many machines. And no company will start manufacturing them unless a down payment has been received from the buyer. And meanwhile, time is running out.

Abalos also revealed that even after the Comelec has paid for the machines, it will still need a minimum of P300 million a year to store the voting machines in air-conditioned rooms. The taxpayer will be spending for those machines even when they are not being used. They will spend close to a billion pesos just for storage before the machines are used again for the next elections.

Hence, it may be more economical to just lease the machines instead of buying them. But where is the company which will agree to lease that many machines only once every three years?

Fourth estate

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'M glad the Social Justice Society brought that petition against Noli de Castro and Loren Legarda. SJS is the lawyers' group that also sought early last month a ban on Vilma Santos and Lito Lapid doing movies while serving as mayor of Lipa and governor of Pampanga respectively. In the latter suit, SJS cited a Local Government Code provision that says mayors and governors "are prohibited from practicing their profession or engaging in any occupation other than the exercise of their functions as local chief executives." I said then that if local officials may not be allowed to moonlight while holding public office, more so national officials.

I have no beef personally with Legarda or De Castro. The first is a friend, the second is an acquaintance but whose daughter is a close friend of my daughter. That can't change the principle of it. I've always said, and will continue to say, that their continuing appearance as hosts in ABS-CBN is unethical to the core. I'm glad SJS has brought it to the attention of the courts.

De Castro's counterargument is this: There is nothing illegal or unethical about hosting "Magandang Gabi, Bayan" while serving as senator. The Civil Service Code, he says, is not absolute in its proscription against public officials engaging in a private business or profession. It allows it after office hours. Just as well, there is no conflict of interest between being a senator and TV personality. "By merely acting as television host, respondent does not have any substantial interest in the business of the broadcast company he works for."

He misses the point.

As far as the hours are concerned, I don't know that being a senator—or congressman, or mayor, or governor—is an 8 to 5 job. You won't find the terms of reference in the Civil Service Code, you'll find it in the expectations of the voters. Voters vote candidates into these jobs because they expect them to be on call 24 hours a day. That does not mean they may not have time for family, or a love life. That means that like the proverbial woman's work, a senator's work is never done. Certainly, it may not leave time to cling to the job one used to have. It may not be illegal, but it is lacking in propriety, if not in class.

It also cheapens public office. You allow De Castro and Legarda to host TV programs and Santos and Lapid to appear in movies, you have to allow Robert Jaworski to coach a team in the PBA and Ramon Revilla to run a cockpit. Indeed, you have to allow other mayors and governors to be boxers, or boxing commentators (Manny Piñol comes to mind), circus performers, drag racers, in-house karaoke singers and beauty contestants, regular or drag (I will not say whom the last brings to mind). To not do otherwise is to discriminate against certain professions as being beneath the dignity of senators.

But this is nothing. There is an added, and critical, dimension to De Castro's and Legarda's case, which is that they are senators and media practitioners at the same time. The conflict of interest does **not** lie, as De Castro suggests, in being a senator and owning shares in the broadcast company. It lies in being a senator and being a talent in the broadcast company at the same time. It lies in being a public official and a journalist at the same time. That is holding a lit match to a powder keg.

You cannot be defendant and judge at the same time. You cannot be scrutinized and scrutinizer at the same time. You cannot be performer and reviewer at the same time. You allow De Castro and Legarda to be in media and you have to allow every elective and appointive official to do so as well. That neither serves public office nor journalism. I do not know how the institution Marcelo H. del Pilar and Chino Roces loved like life itself can survive such an onslaught.

The term, "fourth estate," which refers to journalism, is attributed to the historian Carlyle, though Carlyle himself attributes it to Edmund Burke. In its original sense, the press was the addition to the three estates of the nobility, the church and the common folk, which had parliamentary representation in pre-Revolution France. In its modern sense, however, the media are the addition to the executive, the legislative and the judiciary, which are the three ways by which the people might be heard. You can no more combine the media with any of the three branches of government than you can combine the three branches of government with each other. Democracy is guaranteed only by their strict separation.

The Constitution being clear on the separation of powers, by extension one could make a case for senators being media practitioners as something illegal and not just unethical.

That indicts not just De Castro and Legarda but their home network too. For clearly a great portion of the blame here falls on ABS-CBN for allowing such a patently iniquitous practice to flourish. You want to make exceptions because you profit from them—because De Castro and Legarda bring in good ratings, and because they can become higher officials one day, who can then be persuaded to show gratitude—do not complain when other people do so as well. When public officials hire relatives because "they are qualified anyway," notwithstanding the prohibition on nepotism; when judges sit on cases they have a personal interest in because "we are objective anyway," notwithstanding the provision on conflict of interest; when cops beat up suspects because "they are criminals anyway," notwithstanding the presumption of innocence and the demands of due process.

I don't know chapter and verse, but I believe there's something in the Bible about the impossibility of serving both God and Mammon. Would be good to dwell on it.

* * *

Send comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Illuminating perspectives

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

FILIPINOS marked with waning fervor yesterday the 17th anniversary of the first People Power Revolution. While we need more details to fill the gaps of the events of Feb. 22-25, 1986 that led to the toppling of the 14-year Marcos dictatorship and the restoration of Philippine democracy, 17 years are long enough to map the direction of people power as a route to democratization.

One of the illuminating perspectives to locate the path of Philippine democracy from 1986 is the journey to democracy of the former communist states of Eastern and Central Europe which drew inspiration from the 1986 Philippine People Power Revolution. These are Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Romania. These countries were strapped by iron-clad ties to the Marxist-Leninist ideology and the Soviet system enforced by the Red Army.

Within that framework, it was short of a miracle for these countries to break away from the Soviet empire without violence, except in Romania where blood flowed in the streets of Bucharest when the Romanian people rose in revolt against Stalinist Nicolae Ceausescu. Ceausescu was killed, unlike Ferdinand Marcos who fled Malacañang Palace—thanks to the facilities of the US Embassy and air force—by the skin of his teeth, barely a few hours before the mob stormed the Palace.

The Iron Curtain crumbled in 1989—three years after Edsa I. In that year, the Berlin Wall collapsed against the flood of the East Germans pouring through the breached wall after the ramparts of the Iron Curtain in Hungary made way to the flow of refugees. The Velvet Revolution led by the dissident Vaclav Havel in former Czechoslovakia, took control of Prague, completing the interrupted Prague Spring launched in 1968 by Alexander Dubcek to give communism a "humane face." The liberalization so alarmed Moscow that it sent the Warsaw Pact armies to Eastern Europe to quell the movement.

On Feb. 6, 1989, in Poland, which was the pivotal linchpin of the Soviet Eastern European satellite system and of the Warsaw Pact armies, the Solidarity trade union movement made a political breakthrough with the start of negotiations for power sharing with the RZPR (Polish United Workers' Party) government headed by Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, who a few years earlier, had staged a coup to reanimate the party, outlawed Solidarity and jailed its leader, Lech Walesa.

The round-table negotiations led to plural politics and a series of political reforms, allowing Solidarity to compete in free elections for the Sejm (parliament) and culminating in the election in December 1992 of Walesa as the first non-communist president after 1945. It should be noted that all these communist regimes, except in Romania, fell from the pressure of democratic popular movements without violence. Solidarity, in particular, emphasized non-violence, although its trade unions demonstrated their muscle by strikes that paralyzed the Gdanks shipyards. Solidarity's success in ending communist rule after 47 years owes much to the overall decline of Soviet control in the mid-1980s (hastened by Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika), the key role of the Catholic Church in Poland and the political impact of the election of the polish Pope, the former Archbishop Karol Wojtyla of Cracow.

The first Filipino people power has some similarities with the Eastern European democratization. As in Poland, the Church in the Philippines played a key role in mobilizing People Power in 1986. These risings were non-violent. But there are more significant divergences. In Poland, Walesa lost power in 1995 to the reformed communist, Aleksander Kwasniewski, who has been reelected to lead Poland's push for admission into the European Union in its enlargement to 25 members in 2004. Kwasniewski was a member of Jaruzelski's negotiating panel. According to Polish political scientists I interviewed last September, Walesa was an effective union leader but had no experience in running a country. The return to power of former communists, now reformed, is attributed to the fact that the communists had considerable experience governing through their party and bureaucratic structure, as well as their party discipline, showing up the incompetence of Walesa and his Solidarity cohorts.

Not one of these former communist countries have returned to people powet to change leaders or regimes. East Germany went on to be integrated into the capitalist system of West Germany and into the strong West German economy after reunification. Poland's Kwasniewski is one of the strongest Central European allies of President George W. Bush in his war policy on Iraq. All these systems have strong party and bureaucratic structures.

Only the Philippines, the beacon light of People Power in the 1980s, has gone back to another People Power in 2001. People power toppled two presidents since 1986—Marcos and Joseph Estrada in 2001. From 1972, Marcos began to destroy democratic institutions and the party system. The country has not repaired these political structures.

In 1999, we impeached a president for the first time. It was not completed but it went far enough to spark another people power uprising. In both 1986 and 2001, the Army played a pivotal swing role, causing the collapse of the government. Since 2001, each time a disgruntled group has a grievance, it has conveniently lapsed into a campaign for another people power movement. The habit has caught on to the point that it has acquired the dynamics of mob rule. The new democracies of Eastern Europe, despite their economic difficulties, have achieved long and sustained periods of political stability. Our much older democracy is plagued by volatility and our society is ungovernable mainly because it has lost the foundations of its political institutions.

More on Patch Adams

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HERE'S more on Patch Adams, as gathered by Jim Paredes from his own observations, and from friends and others who were not only privileged to listen to the famous doctor speak, but also accompanied him as he made his way around Metro Manila.

The anecdotes speak of a man who is not only comfortable in his own skin, but has been blessed with the gift of empathy, of going outside of himself to relate to total strangers and look after the healing not only of illness and body, but of sadness, fear and of the soul.

We might ask: Could every doctor be a Patch Adams? We might well ask: Could every one of us become a Patch Adams, whatever our calling, profession, occupation or state in life? In the Hollywood retelling of his story, Patch Adams discovered the freedom to be himself, to break the rules and to reach out to others only after he himself had been on the brink of breaking down and losing touch with himself entirely.

And he very nearly gave up on his self-conceived and self-appointed "ministry" of healing by laughter when a close friend (a girlfriend in the film, but a male colleague in real life, it turns out) was killed by one of their patients. As the movie tells it, Patch Adams pulled back from the edge of despair when a butterfly, which his friend had chosen as a symbol of her life, appeared from out of nowhere and lifted his spirits.

Perhaps Patch Adams in the flesh is the human embodiment of that butterfly, a fleeting presence who lifts others out of humdrum everyday life and gives them the gift of seeing the world with new eyes.

Anyway, here's more of Jim Paredes, himself an artist of extraordinary reach and depth, on Patch Adams:

* * *

THE FILIPINO doctors present at Midtown Hotel, notes Jim, could only shake their heads in disbelief when Patch Adams said that he sometimes spends three to four hours with a patient during consultations, not the perfunctory seven to 10 minutes. He visits them at home, eats with them, listens to their stories and "looks inside their cabinets and drawers and reads their letters," as he put it.

He personally answers in long hand anyone who writes to him. He writes about 800 letters a month. Please do not e-mail. He does not use computers. In the movie, one of his doctor colleagues was killed by a severely mentally deranged patient. A doctor in the audience asked if he felt the need to review his policy of accepting everyone unconditionally after that. He said he and the staff gave it much thought. Was it right to put themselves and their families at risk in their pursuit of service to mankind? Eventually, they decided not to alter their policy. It was only one incident (and one patient) out of the 3,000 deeply troubled patients they had treated. And besides, the doctor who died (a man in real life as opposed to the Hollywood version) would not have had it any other way.

Connecting that incident to 9-11, he said that no one can really be protected from violence—not in New York, Afghanistan and not even in our neighborhoods. The important thing is to heal every place you go to. He does not prescribe tranquilizers because he feels it is demeaning.

He rarely gives painkillers. He is taking his 15-year-old son to Palestine to visit hospitals and "clown" with him on his birthday. Thinking aloud, he said, "I can't imagine taking him to Disneyland."

* * *

HIS Filipino hosts asked him and his partner Dr. Parenti, if they wanted to shop or go to the beach. They flatly said "no" and said they wanted to be with people.

Upon arriving, they immediately visited a hospital. After clowning around with some kids, Patch Adams focused on an old woman who had no *"bantay"* with her. While Dr. Parenti played the accordion, he asked the woman to stand and danced with her, while she wept tears of joy.

He was so amazed seeing a teenage boy holding the hand of a grandmother in the hospital and comforting her. He said that the scene was totally unimaginable in the United States.

A doctor asked him if he was willing to go to Basilan and "clown around" there. After answering that he does it practically everywhere—Afghanistan, Bosnia, he said that it was important that Filipinos should consider doing it themselves instead of asking an American (to do it).

Nevertheless, he said that if there are Filipinos who would volunteer, he would go with them. He ended by saying that it was important that doctors take time to ask why Filipinos are hungry, why our women become prostitutes, why we are killing each other. Healing does not end when the body alone is healed. Society must be healed, too.

* * *

BY THE TIME you read this, I will be in Washington, D.C. attending an international conference on "Pathbreaking Strategies in the War against the Trafficking of Women and Children," upon the invitation of the US State Department.

Part of my preparations for the trip was researching not just the climate and taking out of storage my cold-weather wardrobe, but also the new security precautions in place at airports here and in the United States. Everyone warned me to allot at least three hours before departure for the security checks, and to be ready to endure repeated searches and sweeps. A useful tip I read in a newspaper article: Invest in large sized zip-lock bags in which to put undies and other sensitive items you don't want strangers to be handling. That way, the inspectors can see what you have in your suitcase without getting their gloved hands on them.

I'll give you an update on what it means to travel to the United States at this time in future columns.

Why war, not peace?

COMMENTARY

Abraham P. Sakili

THE STATEMENTS of Nobel Peace Laureate Nelson Mandela (PDI, 2/1/03) accusing the United States of "arrogance" in dealing with Iraq while being inept on Israel's weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and on its stockpiles, pierce right into the heart of contradictions of the US system and foreign policy not only in West Asia but worldwide. As Mandela emphasizes, "If there is a country which has committed unspeakable atrocities, it is the United States of America...they don't care for human beings."

The United States may be the richest and strongest country today, but several contradictions in its system—such as its institutionalized war economy and over consumption of oil resource—have forced it to become violent. With these, it has become imperative for the United States to maintain a global network of monstrous military power, which British scholar F. Greene tags as "military madness," whose primary goal is well said by Mandela, thus, "All Bush wants is Iraqi oil." With only about 5 percent to 7 percent of the world's population, the United States has been pumping 70 percent of the world's oil. The yearly discarding by US plants of 165 million tons of solid waste and gushing of 172 million tons of smoke and fumes translate to about 50 percent of the world's industrial pollution. (G. Stein, "The World the Dollar Built")

The United States today maintains some 800 military installations worldwide. Its armed forces are spread in 140 countries with sizable deployment in 25 of these. Added to these, the United States maintains a whole array of biological and chemical agents designed to spread disease and mass-kill with toxins of no known cures. Its arsenal of nuclear weapons adds up to the equivalent in explosive power of 100 tons of TNT for every human being. It is the US possession of these WMDs that strips it of any right or moral ground to force others to follow its dictates on this matter. On this regard, and as a reaction to Secretary Roilo Golez's view on WMDs "in the wrong hands," let right sense prevail on the fact that there are no "right hands" for "wrong weapons" poised to annihilate mankind.

Some years ago the estimated operating cost of the huge US military establishment was at $100 billion annually—something over $10 million every hour. Involved in about 7,000,000 defense contracts approved yearly were some 22,000 US firms. From 1946 to 1970, the United States spent about $1,000 billion or one million millions on its military establishments.

In the 1980s, the so-called Reaganomics aimed at undermining the Soviet economy had contributed significantly to US recession and growing indebtedness. Thus, early in the 1990s the United States incurred the world's largest debt of about $4 trillion (S. Gill, P.176). Forced by difficult financial position, the United States went into war with Saddam Hussein in 1991, which in the media appeared more of advertising US military hardware for sale. To finance that Gulf War the United States pressed Saudi Arabia and Japan for financial contributions. Today the US defense budget is about 50 percent of the world's total military expenditures. With 56 percent of its national budget allocated to the Pentagon and only 10 percent for its people's health and education, the United States has become a "state of warfare"—not "welfare" as it has been packaged to appear. With these, the US self-anointed role as the "world's policeman" is but a mask for global control. Hence, instead of promoting security, the United States has become the single biggest threat to world peace. (PDI, 9/22/02)

To this day the wheels of American industry are kept going only by a financially high level of military expenditure—and this is true whether the country is at war or not, or in danger or not. Regardless of the state of US relations with the rest of the world, a high expenditure on armaments is to continue. A permanent war economy has, therefore, been institutionalized in the United States. Its history shows that since 1900 military expenditure saved the US economy from a depression that would have been chronic.

An institutionalized war economy obviously cannot serve the interests of maintaining world peace. Such a system needs and creates enemies to survive. It is against such mode that the combined voices of peace-loving people of the world have become loud and clear. With this, Philippine foreign policy must be redirected to serve peace and to abide by the dictum of "no permanent friend...but only permanent national interest"—an interest, however, redefined and pursued not in the narrow pragmatic "carrot" or "parrot" sense, but guided by the worthy principles of peace, freedom and justice—in their truest sense. It is only with leaders of such principles that this planet has a chance to continue to survive, sound and safe.

In the end it disheartens to think that amid the anti-war voices reverberating worldwide, the United States still forces its war on the Iraqis, its madness reigning the world and nothing else. Let's hope and pray that sanity triumphs over the shadow of fear of the "lone world superpower" whose leader's "bullying rhetoric" has consumed much of its post-9/11 gains.

Abraham P. Sakili, is an associate professor of Humanities at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Iraqi academics take sour view of US policy

FEATURE

Samia Nakhoul

BAGHDAD—As US-British invasion forces gather, Muayad al-Wandawi, a modern history professor at Baghdad University, says Iraq has always been prey to Western ambitions.

Wandawi sees US and British policies through a historical prism that refracts long-standing colonial impulses to control Iraq's land, people and vast oil resources.

He recalls how Britain, then ruling Iraq under a League of Nations mandate, installed a monarchy in 1921, when a British warship brought Faisal, a Hashemite son of the Hejaz, in what is now Saudi Arabia, to become king of the new country.

Wandawi tells his political science students that the United States now plans to install its own puppet ruler in Baghdad.

His colleague, Abdel-Kader Mohammad Fahmi, teaches political strategy, with an Iraqi perspective on US thinking.

"I am teaching my students the principles of the Pentagon policy—that America's concept of security has become unethical, invisible and with no boundaries," he said.

"It is open to interpretation and is based on opportunism and interests. American policy is a policy of dictation and imposition. It interferes with our daily life," he added.

Smarting from the penury, humiliation and isolation inflicted by UN sanctions, Wandawi, like many Iraqis, blames the United States and Britain for the 12-year-old embargo.

"I feel that I am being robbed under the cover of the United Nations. The American soldiers should stay with their families rather than allow themselves to be used in this dirty game by leaders who have personal political ambitions," he said.

Such views may seem unsurprising in a country where dissent is ferociously suppressed, but there is no mistaking the pain and anger felt by Wandawi at the way sanctions have narrowed his horizons and stunted Iraq's once-vaunted universities.

"The embargo is the most humiliating thing. I'm a university professor. I have a Ph.D. How can I be neutral toward America when every month I have to go and get my food rations to feed my kids?" he asked.

The government distributes food rations bought under the UN oil-for-food program to most of Iraq's 23 million people.

"We've been eating lentils and beans for 12 years now. Life should not be like that," said Wandawi, who earned a degree in international relations at Britain's Reading University.

"The war is coming. All this scenario at the United Nations is cosmetic," he told Reuters at his office on campus.

The United Nations imposed trade sanctions on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. They cannot be removed before UN weapons inspectors declare Iraq free of chemical, biological, nuclear and long-range missile programs which it agreed to dismantle under the 1991 Gulf War ceasefire terms.

US President George W. Bush and his ally, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, say Iraq has had long enough to obey UN disarmament demands and may now have to be disarmed by force.

Iraqi academics, once comfortably off, have fallen into poverty under sanctions and seen their once sophisticated and pioneering education system disintegrate before their eyes.

Renowned across the Arab world, Iraqi intellectuals can no longer afford to buy books. Worse still, they have had to sell their own volumes to supplement their meagre incomes.

"The cheapest book in London now costs 10 pounds ($15) which means I cannot afford to buy it," said Wandawi, who has seen his monthly wage wither to $150 from $1,000 in 1990.

"The best presents I receive from my foreign friends are books. As soon as any professor gets a book from abroad, we pass it on to each other to photocopy it so we can still read."

Iraq once prided itself on the highest literacy rates in the Arab world. These have not survived the poverty that has forced many school and university students to drop out.

Even primary schools are affected. According to the UN Children's Fund, one in four of Iraqi children aged from 6 to 11 is now staying away from school. The figure for girls alone is 30 percent, an ominous indicator for the future.

Although the Iraqi government provides free education, many students cannot pay for books, notebooks and pens.

"You could notice the economic effects on students from the old torn clothes they wear," Wandawi said. "They stopped eating at the cafeteria. They even stopped buying soft drinks which cost 250 dinars ($0.11)." "We also noticed that men were dropping out to find jobs to help their parents. This is why the university started evening shifts to allow working young men to continue their studies.

"The number of students in the evening shift is now far higher than in the morning shifts," he said.

Wandawi, in his 40s, comes from a generation of academics mostly educated in Britain and the United States in the 1980s when Iraq could still afford to fund foreign scholarships.

"Iraqis do not have a historical enmity with the United States," he said. "I have no problem with the American citizen. My problem is with American policy." Younger academics, who studied in Baghdad, voiced the same suspicion of US motives.

"America has taken a decision to wage war and the pretexts can be simple. It can create a crisis at any moment and start attacking Iraq," said Hassan Hussein, a philosophy lecturer.

One of his colleagues, who asked not to be named, said: "Do you really believe that America, which is capable of monitoring with its satellites everything around the globe, cannot find where Iraq is hiding weapons of mass destruction?

"The real pretext is different from the declared one. It is just that God has given us oil." *Reuters*

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . .?

Comelec official's murder

THE CASE of the murder of Commission on Elections Director Velma Cinco has yet to be resolved more than a year after her death.

Cinco was head of the Comelec's Education and Information Department when ambushed on Nov. 20, 2001, by a motorcycle-riding gunman on Pedro Gil Street, Paco, Manila. She was then on board her car with sister Marian Jayme and son Carlo.

Prior to the killing, Cinco had replaced lawyer Angelina Matibag as EID chief. Matibag became one of the initial suspects because she was overheard saying, *"Palabasin ninyo ang bobong babaeng 'yan. Babarilin ko 'yan. Lahat ng sasama sa kanya, isasama ko sa hukay."*

However, on Oct. 1, 2002, Manila Assistant Prosecutor Raymunda Cruz-Apolo, who conducted the preliminary investigation, cleared Matibag. Apolo said the threats "are not sufficient to establish her culpability in the killing of Cinco."

On Nov. 29, 2001, the National Bureau of Investigation arrested Conrado Robles, also a Comelec employee. The NBI said Robles' face resembled one of the killers' based on the cartographic sketches made with the help of witnesses. On Dec. 14, 2001, murder and frustrated murder charges were filed against him with the Manila Regional Trial Court. The cases were assigned to Branch 53 Judge Reynaldo Alhambra.

Robles' arraignment was postponed several times due to his filing of three motions on different dates: motions for reinvestigation, to quash information and to reopen the reinvestigation. The first motion was granted but the second and third were denied. He was finally arraigned on May 3, 2002, and pleaded not guilty. Later, he also filed a motion for bail.

Case status: The prosecution is still at the stage of presenting its witnesses. The motion for bail was already submitted for resolution.

Armin Adina, PDI Research Department

Subic is a separate and distinct town

I AM writing this letter in behalf of the officers and members of the Subic Tourism Council and Subiqueños as well, who share the same sentiments as I that our town is separate and distinct from the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and Olongapo City. And that, it is only our town that should be called or referred to as "Subic" and not SBMA. The SBMA should be referred to as SBMA and not Subic because we feel that we are losing our own identity, as Subiqueños and an independent municipality.

The municipality of Subic occupies the southernmost portion of the province of Zambales (the first town in Zambales from the South). It is about 139 kilometers north of Manila and it is bounded on the north by Castillejos, on the southeast by Olongapo City, on the west by San Antonio and on the east by Floridablanca, Pampanga. Subic is the most densely populated and ranked as the seventh biggest municipality among the 13 towns in Zambales. It occupies a total land area of 25,506.01 hectares which is distributed among its 16 official barangays.

The town of Subic was founded by an Augustinian friar, Fr. Rodrigo de San Miguel in 1607. Olongapo was once a barrio of Subic and was converted into a municipality by virtue of Executive Order No. 366 issued by then President Carlos P. Garcia on Dec. 7, 1959. The US Navy had utilized Subic Bay as a base under the 1947 Military Bases Agreement. However, in 1991, the extension of this agreement was rejected by the Senate of the Philippines and the US facilities were turned over to the government in 1992. Under Republic Act No. 7227 or the Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992, the Subic Special Economic and Freeport Zone (SSEFZ) was created and it established the administrative organization named the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA).

The SSEFZ includes the municipality of Subic. The SBMA anticipates a gradual expansion of the Freeport Zone with Olongapo City and Subic town as the initial areas targeted for immediate development. Subic today as a town, is separate and distinct from the SBMA and from Olongapo City, and that's my town—a town loved by Subiqueños. It is called Subic.

—MARITES BERDADERO SASPA
municipal tourism officer,
Office of the Mayor,
Baraca, Subic, Zambales

No bus franchise applications accepted since 1996

TO PLACE the issues raised by Neal Cruz in his Feb. 18 column titled, "Too many buses on Edsa" in proper perspective, may I request you to kindly publish this letter for a balanced presentation:

1. Cruz suggested that "the LTFRB should stop issuing franchises for Edsa routes." The LTFRB since 1996 has not accepted franchise applications for buses in Metro Manila.

2. Cruz also said "there are already too many buses on Edsa (in fact, all over Metro Manila) but the LTFRB keeps on giving franchises for more units." About eight to 10 years ago, there were about 8,000 buses on Edsa. Now, there are about 3,000. In the early 1990s the LTFRB had to implement the liberalization of "easy entry" policy of the DOTC in public transportation, which paved the way for the franchising of more PUVs. The "easy entry" or liberalization policy was a conditionality for a foreign-funded project which in fact paved the way for the entry of used buses into the country.

3. "Bus fare rates approved by the LTFRB are too high," according to Cruz. The fixing of fares is through a public hearing attended by consumer groups and a representative of the Office of the Solicitor General to ensure that commuters are represented. Over the years, the LTFRB has set transportation fares that are affordable to commuters and fair to operators. Commuters have not complained that fares set are high while transport operators have always assailed the new fares as inadequate.

4. Since October last year, the LTFRB has been assailed for not setting for hearing two fare increase petitions filed by two jeepney groups. In the setting of fares, the LTFRB places greater weight on the general welfare than on the interest of operators. In fact, the LTFRB has been appealing to transport groups to hold back their petitions, despite the rising costs of fuel.

5. With respect to *"colorum"* buses, time and again the LTFRB has stated that it has no law enforcement powers, the powers to apprehend and impound being lodged in the LTO and the MMDA.

6. Finally, Cruz says that "the traffic problems in Metro Manila are not the problem only of the MMDA," adding that "other government agencies must help solve it." This is correct, that is why in written position papers and communications to other government agencies, the LTFRB has always pointed out that traffic engineering is and must be a component of the franchising process for public utility vehicles.

—DANTE M. LANTIN,
chair, Land Transportation
Franchising and Regulatory
Board, East Avenue, Quezon City

MMDA integrating all sectors into development plans

THIS refers to the commentary titled, "Cities for all, not order above all" by Junefe Gilig Payot on Jan. 19.

The article criticized MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando for not being knowledgeable about urban planning. She referred to Fernando as a "man who sees the city in terms only of roads, sidewalks and geometric axes."

Admittedly, that would be the first impression of Fernando who wants to restore order in Metro Manila by conducting a relentless campaign against illegal vendors and demolishing road obstructions and illegal structures.

In fairness, Fernando is just implementing the plans and programs embodied in the Regional Development Plan (RDP), 2000-2004, which was formulated by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, in consultation with the line government agencies, local governments, non-government organizations and private sector representatives.

In fact, the clearing of sidewalks is only one of the priority sectoral programs under the Infrastructure Sector of the RDP. The MMDA's Regional Development Council is constantly meeting and consulting with major stakeholders as well as the concerned sectors in the planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring of strategic programs of the MMDA.

I fully believe that the MMDA is performing its urban planning functions. It is integrating and not segregating any sector of society into all its development programs.

—RAUL D. VERCELES,
Engineering Operations Center ,
Metropolitan Manila
Development Authority, Edsa
corner Orense Street,
Guadalupe, Makati City

Makati calls it political will, not obstinacy

WE write in response to the column of Amando Doronila ("The obstinacy of Makati and Mandaluyong") on Feb. 19.

What Doronila considers obstinacy we would describe as an exercise of political will. We knew that our decision to opt out of the UVVRP suspension would be unpopular to certain sectors of the larger community and the press. But we believe it is beneficial to the constituents of the city. By constituents, we do not refer only to the residents of Makati but also to the people who work in Makati, including Doronila.

Doronila made the baseless statement that the exclusion of Makati from the suspension of the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) was based on "unverified claims" that the suspension would aggravate the congestion in the city. For his information, Makati has the distinction of having the largest concentration of motor vehicles in an area which is roughly 4.3 percent of Metro Manila's total land area. Studies made by the city government's urban development office, and even by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, show that with the UVVRP, Makati has an average of 300,000 vehicles on its roads on workdays. In contrast, there are only 45,000 motor vehicles registered in Makati. This means that the people who work, transact business or visit Makati account for most of the vehicles on our roads. In short, we have 25 percent of the total number of vehicles in Metro Manila crammed in an area representing 4.3 percent of the entire metropolis.

Again, studies of the MMDA show that the UVVRP has succeeded in reducing the volume of vehicles by 20 percent. Even so, Makati still experiences nightmarish gridlocks. It does not take a rocket scientist to conclude that when you lift the UVVRP you allow the 20 percent to enter your roads. It is hard to imagine how one can reduce traffic congestion by allowing more vehicles on the road.

The city government has always supported a metropolitan approach to addressing the concerns of the National Capital Region, particularly traffic management, flood control and waste management. This also means we are ready to help other cities and municipalities in Metro Manila in the event of calamities and disasters. Makati has the equipment, the trained personnel and the commitment to provide such assistance.

We pray that Doronila's imaginary bubonic plague outbreak does not happen. But if it does, we would like to assure him that Makati will be there to help its neighbors. Having said that, we again stress that our decision not to go along with the UVVRP suspension is in the best interest of our city and our constituents. We believe it is the correct decision. The UVVRP suspension is an experiment we would rather do without.

—JOSELITO SALGADO,
officer in charge,
Information and Community
Relations Department,
Makati City

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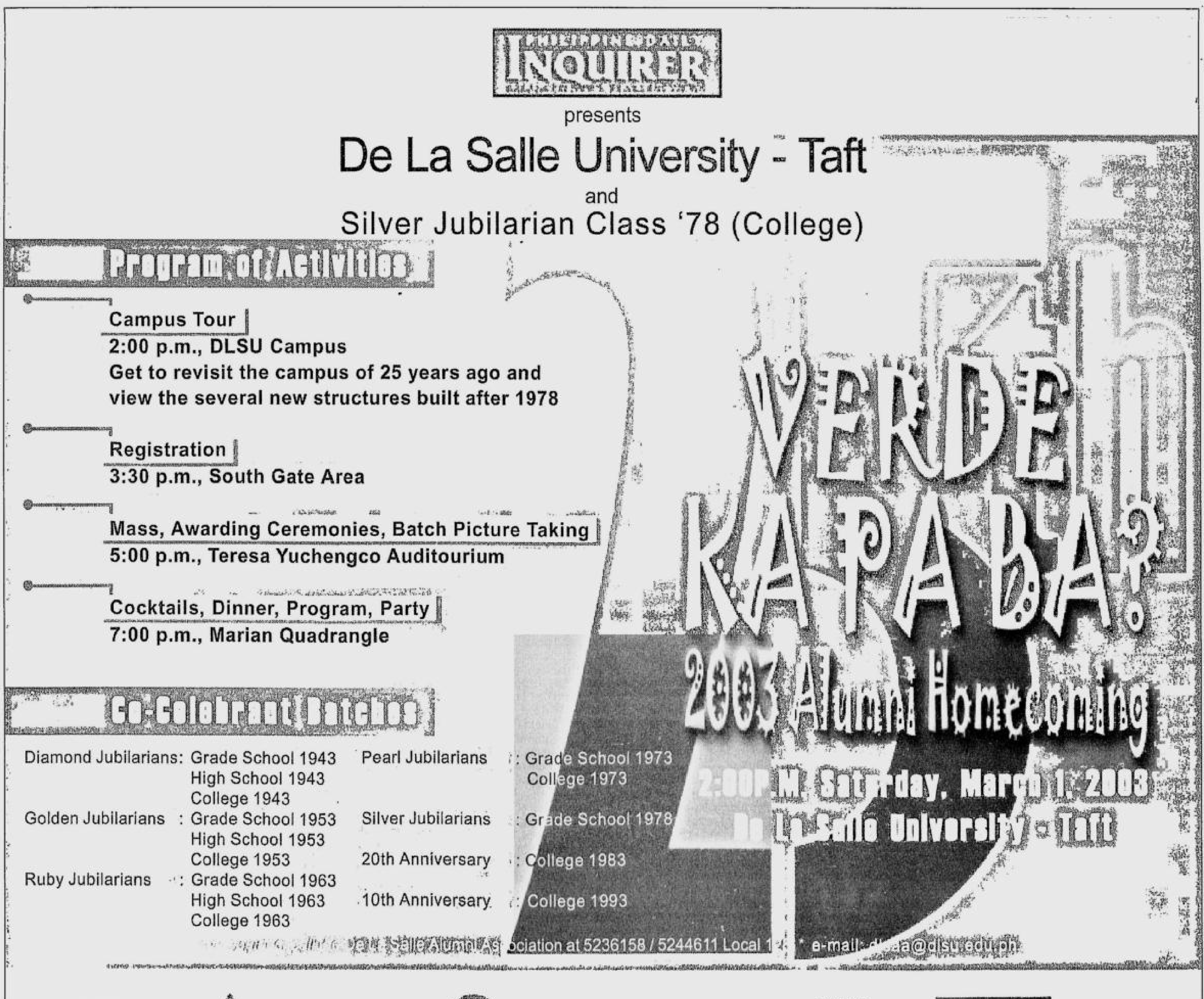

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
presents
De La Salle University - Taft
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Silver Jubilarian Class '78 (College)

Program of Activities

Campus Tour
2:00 p.m., DLSU Campus
Get to revisit the campus of 25 years ago and view the several new structures built after 1978

Registration
3:30 p.m., South Gate Area

Mass, Awarding Ceremonies, Batch Picture Taking
5:00 p.m., Teresa Yuchengco Auditourium

Cocktails, Dinner, Program, Party
7:00 p.m., Marian Quadrangle

VERDE KA PA BA?
2003 Alumni Homecoming
2:00 P.M. Saturday, March 1, 2003
De La Salle University - Taft

Co-Celebrant Batches

Diamond Jubilarians:	Grade School 1943 High School 1943 College 1943
Golden Jubilarians :	Grade School 1953 High School 1953 College 1953
Ruby Jubilarians :	Grade School 1963 High School 1963 College 1963
Pearl Jubilarians :	Grade School 1973 College 1973
Silver Jubilarians :	Grade School 1978
20th Anniversary :	College 1983
10th Anniversary :	College 1993

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Tensions rise as N. Korea fires missile

SEOUL—North Korea has fired a missile into the Sea of Japan, triggering renewed tension Tuesday as South Korea prepared to swear-in a new president who has pledged to seek a peaceful resolution to Pyongyang's nuclear weapons drive.

The missile was fired Monday into international waters in the Sea of Japan, a South Korean defense ministry official said, adding there were no details immediately available about the type of missile fired, or about its range.

"The only information we have is that a missile was fired from an unknown location in North Korea into the East Sea (Sea of Japan)," he said.

"We are trying to determine whether it was designed to test a new missile or just part of an exercise by North Korea troops," he said.

North Korea said it was unable to confirm that a missile had been launched, according to a Xinhua news agency report from Pyongyang, citing a foreign ministry spokesperson.

South Korea's JoongAng Ilbo newspaper said that a ground-to-ship missile launched by North Korea fell into the sea 60 km off the east coast of North Korea's South Hamgyong province.

Japanese media said the missile was a surface-to-vessel short-range Silkworm with a maximum range of 100 km.

Jiji Press news agency quoted a Japanese defense agency source as saying North Korea fired two missiles, believed to be old Chinese models, at different times Monday but one of them failed.

News of the missile firing emerged as senior world figures, including US Secretary of State Colin Powell, gathered here for the inauguration Tuesday of South Korea's new President Roh Moo-Hyun.

Amid international outcry and pressure over its nuclear weapons drive, North Korea has threatened to lift its self-imposed moratorium on missile tests.

North Korea agreed to a moratorium on missile testing after it caused international alarm in 1998 when it test-fired a ballistic missile that flew over northeastern Japan into the Pacific Ocean.

Last month as the nuclear crisis deepened, North Korea pulled out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and then threatened to resume missile testing.

The White House in Washington said it was looking into reports that North Korea had fired a missile.

A US administration official said the US believes "this was a launch of a shorter-range tactical missile," not a ballistic one.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said Tokyo was "collecting and analyzing information" on the North's new missile launch.

"At least we do not have information that a ballistic missile was launched," he said.

Reports of the missile launch dragged down share prices in Tokyo and Seoul.

Investors dumped the yen in Japan where experts have warned Pyongyang might resume missile tests after Washington cut off fuel shipments in December last year over the North's nuclear weapons drive. *AFP*

Roh delivers strong mesage to Pyongyang

SEOUL—Roh Moo-Hyun, South Korea's new president, sent a strong message to North Korea on Tuesday in his inaugural address, saying the Stalinist regime must choose between securing its survival or pursuing nuclear weapons.

ROH

Roh, 56, outlined his vision for keeping the peace on the Korean peninsula which included a warning to North Korea that its nuclear weapons drive cannot be tolerated.

Ahead of the ceremony the defense ministry here said that Pyongyang had fired a missile into the Sea of Japan, putting South Korea's armed forces on alert. It was unclear whether it was a routine military drill or whether Pyongyang was testing a new missile.

Roh spelt out the benefits the reclusive regime can expect to receive in international recognition, support and aid if it renounces its weapons drive.

"If it renounces its nuclear development program, the international community will offer many things that it wants. It is up to Pyongyang whether to go ahead and obtain nuclear weapons or to get guarantees for the security of its regime and international economic support," he said.

Roh also called for change in the 50-year-old alliance with the United States, which he deems unfair, and stressed his commitment to his predecessor Kim Dae-Jung's policy of engagement with the Stalinist North, branded part of an "axis of evil" last year by US President George W. Bush.

Roh believes that North Korea, a bankrupt Stalinist state dubbed an "outlaw" nation last month by Bush, should be treated as a partner, not as a criminal.

Washington maintains that giving anything to North Korea amounts to rewarding bad behavior and Bush insists he will never back down to Pyongyang's nuclear "blackmail."

Roh beat Washington's favorite Lee Hoi-Chang—a 67-year-old conservative—by two percentage points in the Dec. 19 poll, helped by a wave of anti-American sentiment that brought hundreds of thousands of Koreans onto the streets late last year. *AFP*

China rejects Powell proposals

SEOUL—Chinese officials rebuffed a US proposal Monday for a regional coalition to pressure North Korea to end its nuclear weapons program and told US Secretary of State Colin Powell that direct talks between the United States and North Korea hold the best hope for resolving the dispute.

On Tuesday, Powell is expected to announce a major donation of US food to the North Korean people, many of whom are believed to suffer severe famine-induced malnutrition.

North Korea and Iraq dominated separate meetings Powell held with Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, Vice President Hu Jintao and President Jiang Zemin.

The discussions on Iraq were inconclusive. China favors continued UN inspections in Iraq as opposed to a second UN Security Council resolution that would authorize military action should Iraq refuse to disarm. The United States and Britain are to propose the resolution on Tuesday.

Left unclear from Powell's talks in Beijing was whether China would veto a second resolution if it should come to a council vote.

On North Korea, Powell has pushed for a multilateral effort to dismantle Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program for weeks, with scant results.

At a news conference Monday, the American said the North Korean weapons issue "is a matter for China, it's a matter for South Korea, it's a matter for Japan, it's a matter for Russia, and it's a matter for the United Nations."

He added that the United States feels strongly that "North Korea's actions pose a threat to regional stability and to the global non-proliferation regime."

Chinese state television quoted Tang, the foreign minister, as saying that China hopes for talks on the nuclear issue between the United States and North Korea "on an equal basis." *AP*

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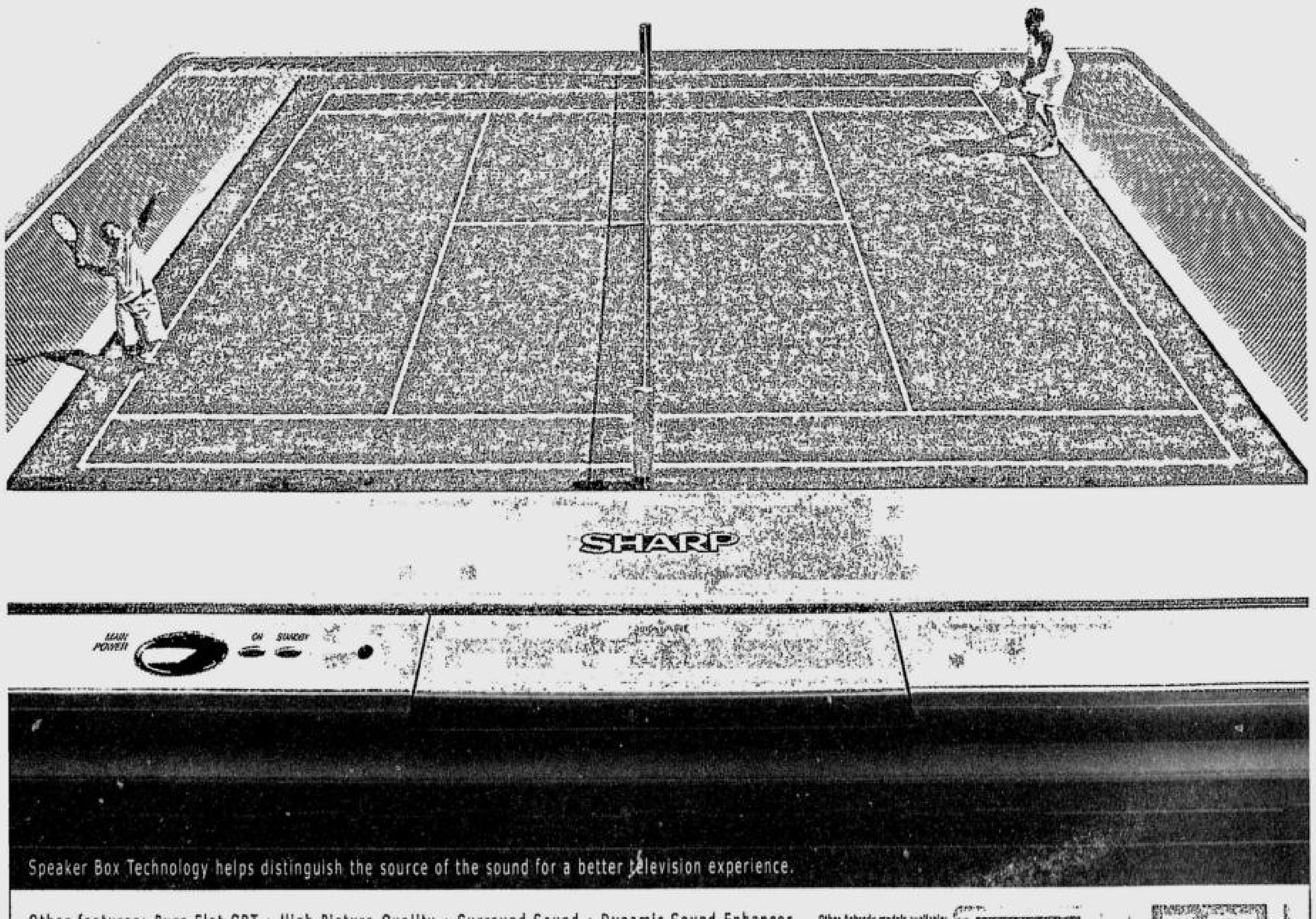

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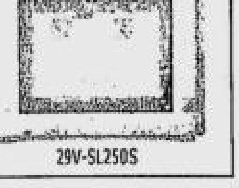
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UN indicts Wiranto for crimes in East Timor

FORMER Indonesian military commander Gen. Wiranto in this May 23, 2000 file photo. REUTERS

DILI, East Timor—The United Nations on Tuesday indicted the former Indonesian armed forces chief, along with six other senior generals and East Timor's ex-governor for crimes against humanity during the territory's bloody independence vote in 1999.

"The accused have all been charged with crimes against humanity for murder, deportation and persecution," the United Nations said in a statement issued in the East Timorese capital of Dili.

The statement said the alleged crimes "were all undertaken as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against the civilian population of East Timor and specifically targeted those who were believed to be supporters of independence for East Timor."

Topping the list of indictments was ex-Indonesian armed forces commander Gen. Wiranto, who has long been named as the man most responsible for the bloodletting that swept the former Indonesian territory when its citizens voted for independence in the UN-sponsored referendum.

Rights groups have long called for Wiranto, who like many Indonesians uses a single name, to be held accountable.

However, it seems unlikely that Indonesia will hand over either Wiranto or the six other generals to prosecutors in East Timor. Jakarta has so far has refused to honor UN arrest warrants, citing its policy not to extradite its nationals.

Lawyers for the men, all of whom are believed to be in Indonesia, said they had yet to receive the indictment and declined to comment on its contents.

The indictment also charges six generals who were responsible for security in East Timor and ex-governor Abilio Jose Osorio Soares with funding, training and arming the pro-Indonesia militias that joined the Indonesian military in killing nearly 2,000 people and forcing 250,000 Timorese to flee their homes before and after the referendum.

Along with Wiranto, those indicted are Maj. Gen. Zacky Anwar Makarim, Maj. Gen. Kiki Syahnakri, Maj. Gen. Adam Rachmat Damiri, Col. Suhartono Suratman, Col. Mohammad Noer Muis, Lt. Col. Yayat Sudrajat and Soares.

Several of those indicted Tuesday were among 18 military and police officials already facing trial in Jakarta for their alleged involvement in the violence. Soares has been sentenced to three years, but remains free on appeal, while Damiri and Suratman's trials are still ongoing. Sudrajat has been cleared of all charges.

Jakarta points to the trials as proof of its commitment to ensure justice. But human rights activists have criticized the trials as a whitewash. In total, only four suspects have been found guilty.

Tuesday's indictment accuses the men of involvement in 280 killings in 10 separate attacks. Among them were a church massacre in Liquica, an attack on a rally in Dili and an attack on a church compound in Dili.

Arrest warrants have been requested from the Dili District Court. They will then be forwarded to Indonesia's Attorney General, UN officials said.

The United Nations governed East Timor for 2 1/2 years until the territory achieved independence last May. The world body still provides government advisers, several hundred policemen and about 2,500 peacekeeping troops in the world's newest nation.

Nearly 150 suspects have so far been charged by the United Nations, usually in groups of about a dozen. The suspects have included at least 24 Indonesian soldiers. About two dozen former militiamen have been tried and convicted in the past two years in East Timor.

Under an understanding with East Timorese and Indonesian officials, the United Nations reserves the right to indict alleged perpetrators, who are then tried in either East Timorese of Indonesian courts. *AP*

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Each course is scheduled every Saturday from 12:30-7:30p.m. at the 5th floor, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, cor. Gil Puyat Avenue. Course fee per participant is Php6,500.00 for CREBA members and Php7,500.00 for non-member.

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A course under the Restaurant and Food Service Management Program, this course will enable the participant to know the pertinent decisions, strategies, operations, practices, functions, activities and methods related to the management of people in the food service industry. All dimensions related to people in their employment relationships, and all the dynamics that flow from it including the realization of the individual employee in terms of their career aspirations.
Schedule: Saturdays, from Mar. 15 - Apr. 26, 2003, 1:00pm-7:00pm
Course fee: Php 5,880.00/participant inclusive of handouts

Computer-Based & Multimedia Training & Development

Offered in partnership with the Philippine Society for Training and Development (PSTD), this prepares the trainer to design highly interactive Computer-Based Training (CBT) material that will engage and motivate learners. It will also examine when and how to apply multi-media in CBT, the structuring of the content for most effectiveness, the placement of practices to develop skills, knowledge, and design layout for screen and documentation.
Schedule: Saturdays, from Mar. 15 - Apr. 26, 2003, 1:00pm-7:00pm
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Offered in partnership with the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) and the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA), this course focuses on the productivity issues associated in operating a retail store. Salient points on visual merchandising, store layout and design, space management and category management will be given emphasis in the discussions.
Schedule: Saturdays, from March 1 - 22, 2003, 1:00pm-7:00pm &
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Course fee: Php 6,250.00/participant for PRA/PFA members
Php 6,750.00/participant for non-members

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A course under the Human Resource Management Program, this course develops the participant's competency to formulate, implement, and evaluate an organization's performance-for-pay system in the context of its goals/mission/vision and culture.
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Course fee: Php 5,880.00/participant inclusive of handouts

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A course under the Technology Management Program, Information Technology is the catalyst of change in today's business environment. This course develops the participant's skills in managing changes in the business environment.
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Offered in partnership with the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (PANA), this course will help participants decipher the difference between Public Relations (PR) and Advocacy Marketing. It will also present information when both can either be distinct and independent or correlated and integrated. The participants will have actual hands-on experience in doing public relations and advocacy marketing work. This experience shall be the foundation for the participants in developing their own PR and Advocacy Marketing Programs.
Schedule: Saturdays, from Mar. 8 - Apr. 12, 2003, 1:00pm-7:00pm
Course fee: Php 7,750.00/participant for PANA members
Php 8,750.00/participant for non-members

Organizational Development

A course under the Organizational Development Program, this course enables the participant to understand the nature of organizations as a dynamic systems; acquire skills in diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of an organizational culture; and design strategies to facilitate synergistic interactions toward the achievement of a desired organizational culture.
Schedule: Saturdays, from Mar. 15 - Apr. 26, 2003, 1:00pm-7:00pm
Course fee: Php 5,880.00/participant inclusive of handouts

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A course under the Strategic Marketing Management Program, this course focuses on how advertising, any paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor, serves as a tool for meeting short and long-term marketing objectives. The course focuses on the process through which advertising concepts evolve and develop.
Schedule: Saturdays, from Mar. 8 - Apr. 12, 2003, 1:00pm-7:00pm
Course fee: Php 5,880.00/participant inclusive of handouts

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QUAKE VICTIMS REUTERS

Children cook a meal in front of a collapsed house after a strong earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale struck Bachu County in China's northwestern region of Xinjiang Feb. 24. At least 260 people were killed and more than 4,000 people injured in the deadliest earthquake to hit the predominantly Muslim region since 1949, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Senators raise constitutionality of US troop deployment in Colombia

BOGOTA, Colombia—Washington's plan to send more troops to Colombia to help in the search for three Americans captured by rebels may run into a roadblock in the Colombian Senate, a top lawmaker said Monday.

Members of the Senate's foreign relations committee are looking into the constitutionality of the deployment and may call a special session to debate the matter, said Jimmy Chamorro, vice president of the committee. The Senate is currently in recess.

A spokesperson for the US Southern Command, which oversees military operations in Latin America, said Monday President George W. Bush had authorized up to 150 more military personnel be sent.

Bush ordered the deployment after three US contractors were captured by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, when their US government plane went down in southern Colombia Feb. 13. A fourth American and a Colombian on the plane were shot and killed.

The Pentagon has not said exactly what role the new forces will play in Colombia, throwing into doubt the constitutionality of their presence in this South American nation.

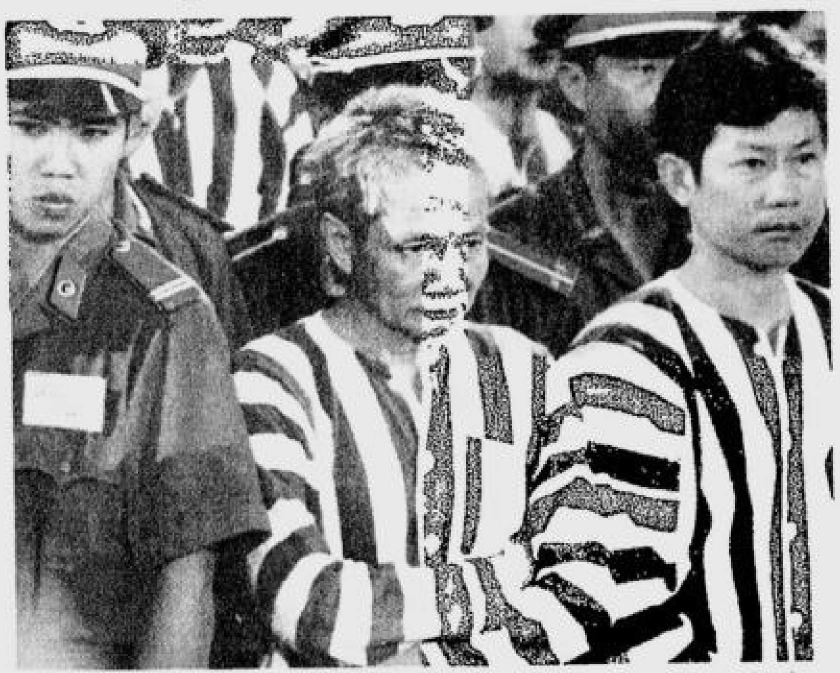
"If they are coming to participate in offensive operations, the constitution requires the authorization of the Senate," Chamorro said. "But if they are coming to offer technical assistance, that is provided for in the bilateral treaties and doesn't require authorization."

More than 200 US military personnel are already in Colombia training local Army troops. The American trainers are prohibited from taking on an advisory position and cannot participate in combat missions.

The 17,000-strong FARC considers US involvement in Colombia an act of war and has warned that it would attack Americans and US interests in the country.

The majority of Colombians support the US involvement here, but several lawmakers believe Washington is setting up for another Vietnam. *AP*

Mafia boss' trial opens to full house



TRUONG Van Cam, or Nam Cam, center, reputed godfather of organized crime, is surrounded by Vietnamese police and other defendants in court during Vietnam's largest corruption trial ever. AP

HO CHI MINH CITY—The show trial of Ho Chi Minh City mafia boss Nam Cam and 154 others accused of involvement in Vietnam's biggest ever corruption scandal opened Tuesday to a full house in the southern business capital.

Amid tight security in the packed chamber of the grand but dilapidated People's Court, presiding magistrate Bui Hoang Danh read out the names of the defendants, the dates of their arrest and the charges brought against them.

A crowd of around 500 people, held back by Kalashnikov-wielding police, gathered outside the building, a relic of France's colonial past, to listen to a live broadcast of the action taking place inside the steamy court room.

Clad in green and white-striped prison pyjamas and wearing a pair of thongs, Nam Cam cut a forlorn figure as he stood beside his former underlings and patrons for the lengthy introduction.

Each defendant was then in turn led up to the front of the court to describe their backgrounds and any past criminal convictions.

"In the past I was a dock worker and before my arrest I worked in the restaurant business," the softly spoken 55-year-old Nam Cam told the court.

A veteran of the defunct South Vietnamese Army, Nam Cam, more formally known as Truong Van Cam, is up on seven charges ranging from murder, bribery and gambling to helping fugitives escape the country.

If convicted at the end of the trial, which is set to last for 55 days, he could face the death penalty, a fate that many observers say is a foregone conclusion.

Among Nam Cam's co-defendants are 21 state employees implicated in his nationwide gambling empire, including two expelled members of the Communist Party's powerful Central Committee, 13 senior police officers and four former prosecutors. They are likely to be handed short custodial sentences.

Revelations about the patronage networks that protected the gangster's criminal activities for more than a decade have plunged the party into its worst ever crisis and severely eroded its moral and ideological legitimacy.

Aware of the need to snuff out any murmuring of discontent, Hanoi has touted the trial as proof that it is serious about cracking down on corruption, a major grievance among Vietnam's population.

"They have a long way to go before they get to grips with corruption. This could simply be a showcase to legitimize the fact that they are not doing much else," said one foreign diplomat.

With a string of minor gambling convictions already under his belt, Nam Cam was arrested in May 1995 and sent to a re-education camp, but was released seven months early from his three-year sentence following intervention by senior officials alleged to be on his payroll.

He was re-arrested in December 2001 and over the following 12 months, a special investigation team led by the Ministry of Public Security's graft-buster, Nguyen Viet Thanh, dismantled Nam Cam's murky underworld and probed his connections among high ranking officials. *AFP*

A GROUP of peace activists holding candles and placards that read "No to war" receive hot drinks during a vigil in the Turkish capital of Ankara, Feb. 24. The group say they will hold a vigil until the parliament votes against allowing in US combat troops. Turkey's Cabinet agreed to allow in US combat troops for a possible war in Iraq and a vote on Tuesday is widely expected. AP

US judge throws out anti-Iraq war lawsuit

BOSTON—A federal judge Monday threw out a lawsuit that sought to bar President George W. Bush from launching an attack against Iraq without a congressional declaration of war.

The lawsuit, filed earlier this month by six Democratic congressmen and three unidentified members of the military and their parents, said that under the Constitution, only Congress can declare war.

The plaintiffs said the congressional resolution approved in October supporting military action in Iraq did not specifically declare war and improperly ceded the decision to Bush.

But USDistrict Judge Joseph Tauro ruled the case could not go forward without "clear, resolute conflict" between the executive and legislative branches that would require a judge's intervention.

Tauro also rejected the contention that the president must have congressional authority to order American forces into combat.

"Case law makes clear that the Congress does not have the exclusive right to determine whether or not the United States engages in war," he said.

Congress has not formally declared a war since World War II. The War Powers Act, passed in 1973 in response to the war in Vietnam and the actions of President Nixon, requires the president to seek congressional approval before or shortly after ordering military action abroad.

John Bonifaz, an attorney for the plaintiffs, called the ruling "simply wrong" and said he will appeal.

"The president is not a king," Bonifaz said, surrounded by a few dozen anti-war demonstrators who attended the hearing and marched outside the courthouse. "He does not have the power to wage war against another country without a declaration of war."

An attorney for the government, Joseph Hunt, had argued that the court had no standing to issue an injunction because there was no conflict between Congress and the president. Hunt said it was also premature for the court to get involved because no one could say whether war was truly imminent. *AP*

Unsuccessful AIDS vaccine gives hope to Asians, blacks

WASHINGTON—The first attempt to develop a vaccine to prevent AIDS has failed, vaccine-maker VaxGen Inc. said on Monday, but there was a ray of hope it could help blacks and Asians.

Long-awaited results from VaxGen's trial of AIDSVAX show the vaccine reduced the rate of HIV infection by just 3.8 percent in 5,000 men and women considered at high risk in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and Netherlands.

"Overall, what we see is the trial failed," VaxGen President Dr. Donald Francis told a conference call.

The vaccine was tested only against the strains of the virus found in North America and Europe, so the findings do not apply to Africa and Asia, the regions hardest-hit by AIDS.

Most AIDS researchers had not expected AIDSVAX to protect very many people from infection with the human immunodeficiency virus. But they were intrigued by the findings that the vaccine seemed to offer protection to blacks and Asians but not to whites and Hispanics.

For the study VaxGen gave injections of either the vaccine or placebo to 5,108 gay and bisexual men and 309 high-risk women. They started in 1998 and then watched to see who went on to become infected with HIV.

All the volunteers were told about safe sex practices such as using condoms to protect themselves and partners.

When VaxGen's figures were analyzed, they showed that Asians, blacks and self-described "others" who got the vaccine had a 67-percent lower rate of infection than those who got a placebo shot.

There were only 498 blacks and Asians and "others" in the trial, so the numbers are difficult to interpret. Of all 5,000 volunteers only 127 became infected with HIV—only 25 among the blacks and Asians—which is a small number of cases to draw any conclusions from.

"The company is claiming that this vaccine works better in African Americans and other non-Hispanic racial subgroups based on a difference of five people," Martin Delaney of AIDS information group Project Inform said in a statement. *Reuters*

HAITI FESTIVAL

TWO boys covered in red and white paint Feb. 24 as they take part in Carnival festivities in Jacmel, Haiti. AFP

Use of pumps to sterilize women probed

NEW DELHI, India—A report that health workers in Uttar Pradesh state were using bicycle pumps and dirty equipment to sterilize women in a World Bank-funded program has prompted an investigation by the national human rights watchdog.

The National Human Rights Commission gave the government of Uttar Pradesh—India's most populous state—four weeks to reply to its Feb. 17 demand for an explanation, commission spokesperson Maushmi Chakraborty said Monday.

The commission acted after a story in an Indian news magazine, The Week, described poor practices at health centers in the state. It quoted women as saying they had become pregnant despite undergoing sterilization at centers run by the state government.

"In place of the high-precision . . . equipment that pumps air into the abdomen of women undergoing laparoscopic sterilization surgery, they use a bicycle pump," the magazine wrote in its Dec. 22 issue.

A laparoscope is an instrument introduced surgically into the abdomen for medical examinations. *AP*

Will upgraded Patriot do better in new war?

By Justin Pope

ANDOVER, Massachusetts—David Hartman, who commanded an air defense battalion outside Tel Aviv during the Gulf War, remembers the thrill of watching a Patriot missile race into the sky and destroy an incoming Iraqi Scud.

He also remembers the sickening feeling when 28 US soldiers were killed in a barracks in Saudi Arabia, after a Patriot system failed.

"Soldiers were depending on Patriot to protect them and it didn't," said Hartman, now an executive at Raytheon Corp., whose factory is churning out new Patriots in the event of a second war with Iraq. "That's our mission: not to let that happen again."

Since the 1991 war, the military has spent $3 billion to upgrade older Patriots, or Pac-2s, and develop a new version, called the Pac-3, which is built by Lockheed Martin Corp. but plugs into Raytheon radars and launchers.

While Pac-2s explode near targets and try to bring them down with shrapnel, the Pac-3 is designed to obliterate incoming missiles, such as Iraqi Scuds, by ramming them head-on.

Still, there are doubts that the anti-missile missile is up to the prodigious task of knocking Scuds out of the sky.

Politically, the Patriot was a hero of the Gulf War for keeping Israel out of the conflict and preserving the coalition. Former President George H. W. Bush visited the factory here to thank workers who built the missile.

But the Patriot's tactical achievements came under fire almost as soon as the shooting stopped.

The Army backed off initial claims that the Patriot successfully engaged 80 percent of the Scuds it was fired against. A congressional report concluded that Patriots downed Scuds just four times in 47 firings.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology missile expert Theodore Postol declared in 1991 there was no evidence the Patriots ever hit a Scud.

Would the Patriot perform better in a second war with Iraq? Raytheon says the improvements expand the "effective defended footprint"—i.e. the area the missiles can reliably protect—by a factor of seven over the Persian Gulf War.

Although Raytheon won't provide specifics, Gulf War-era Patriots were only designed to protect an airport-sized area from an incoming ballistic missile, said Tim Carey, Raytheon's vice president of the Patriot line.

"Now you can start thinking about protecting a metropolitan region," Carey said.

Raytheon has a lot riding on the Patriot's success. While it has a second shift working on upgrades for the US order, foreign sales have been slow. The company told workers Wednesday it planned to lay off 300 people at the plant here.

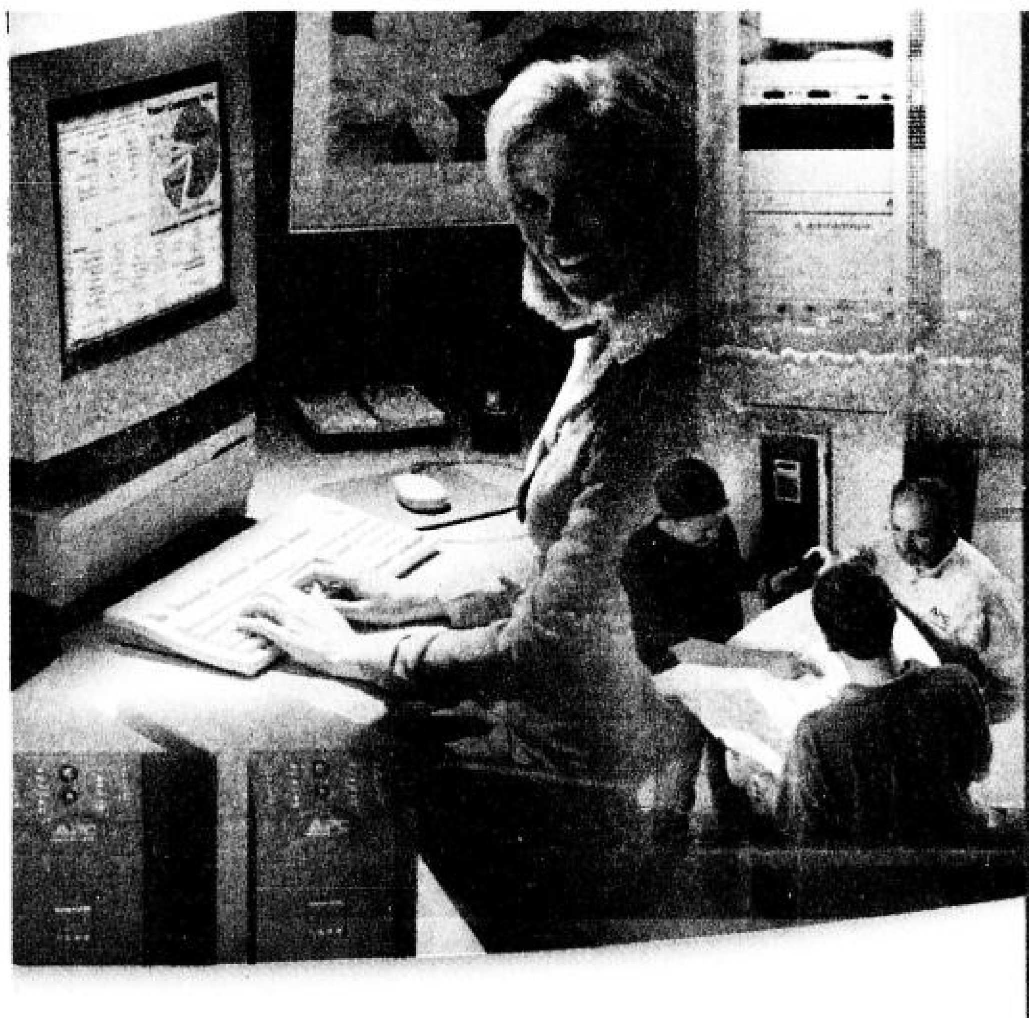
Carey says the debate over the success rate is old news. Investigators found it almost impossible to determine whether Scuds were brought down by exploding Patriots or their own malfunctions.

But he acknowledges there were shortcomings. By the Army's count, the Patriot was 70 percent effective over Saudi Arabia and 40 percent over Israel. In revamping the Patriot, engineers have paid particular attention to the disparity.

Part of the explanation was that even missiles that may have been hit were still falling on populated suburbs in Israel. The first improvement was to build wireless launchers that can now be placed 30 km from their radar and control trucks.

But the crux of the problem was that Scuds fired at Israel had farther to travel. They were launched higher and descended faster, pushing the number-crunching systems inside the Patriot to their limits.

Now, Raytheon says, those systems are far more powerful. Signals from Doppler pulse radar, installed in 1995, are processed by software that gives readings precise enough to distinguish between parts of a missile that breaks up in flight. It can steer the Patriot to the warhead. *AP*



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6 soldiers killed in Capiz clash

By Nestor Burgos Jr. and Jhunnex Napallacan *PDI Visayas Bureau*

ILOILO CITY—Six Army soldiers, including a captain, were killed in an encounter between government troops and communist rebels in Capiz on Monday.

One militiaman and a suspected rebel also died in the clash in Barangay Daan Sur, Tapaz town, said Col. Romeo Gan, commander of the Army's 12th Infantry Battalion, in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

One soldier was slightly wounded, he said.

The number of government fatalities has been the biggest so far on Panay Island in recent years.

Gan identified the rebel casualty as Israel "Ka Bob" Giganto, alleged leader of the New People's Army's Jose Percival Estocada Command operating in central Panay.

The bodies of the slain soldiers were airlifted to Iloilo City. Gan declined to name them pending notification of their families. He, however, confirmed that one of the fatalities was the officer-in-charge of the civic mission unit.

Gan said two teams of 18 soldiers under the Army's Task Force Panay were investigating intelligence reports that the rebels were about to attack an Army engineering unit when they encountered about 20 rebels at the Sibaguan Creek in Barangay Daan Sur, about a three-hour trek from the poblacion.

The soldiers, he said, had just come from a civic mission in the adjacent Barangay Bato-Bato.

Gan said the two teams lost contact with each other during the 30-minute gunfight that began at around 5:30 p.m.

Military reinforcements were delayed because night had set in after the clash. They only reached the battle scene at around 1 p.m. yesterday.

In Bohol, a member of the 704th Regional Mobile Group based in Barangay Catagbacan, Loon town was wounded in an ambush staged by NPA rebels yesterday morning.

Supt. Sancho Bernales, provincial police director, said one Police Officer 1 Grapa suffered wounds from the broken windshield of their service vehicle.

He said Grapa and his companions were on their way to Tagbilaran City when they were fired upon by rebels at about 7:30 a.m. in Barangay Basak, Loon.

Bernales said the rebels might not have intended to kill the policemen because only one shot was fired at the vehicle.

Loon Mayor Cesar Tomas Lopez agreed, describing the incident as pure harassment.

Bernales said the communist rebels might just have wanted to make their presence felt in the town.

In Albay, three still unidentified NPA rebels were killed in an encounter with government troops in Barangay Pandan, Ligao City, on Monday.

Brig. Gen. Santiago Prejido, head of 9th Infantry Brigade, said in a report that soldiers of the 22nd Infantry Battalion led by Sgt. Johnny Casildo encountered an undetermined number of rebels at around 1:30 p.m.

Government troops recovered four M-16, one M-14 rifle and one carbine rifles. ***With a report from Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

NPA rebels kill 2 men over quarrying

ANGAT, Bulacan—Communist assassins gunned down two men in separate incidents in this town and San Miguel on Monday and Tuesday, police said.

The New People's Army, in leaflets distributed here on Tuesday morning, claimed responsibility for the death of Nilo Santos, 46, Angat planning and development officer, for his alleged links to illegal quarrying in the town.

Santos was shot in a neighbor's house in Barangay Sta. Cruz here at about 7:30 p.m. Monday.

Insp. Apolinario Agustin, Angat deputy police chief, said Santos was talking with his neighbor, Antonio Pascual, when four men aboard a Wrangler jeep bumped Santos' black Ford F-150 pickup parked in front of Pascual's house.

When Santos checked his vehicle, one of the four assassins shot him.

In a statement sent to the INQUIRER, the NPA's Guerrilla Front Committee in Bulacan said Santos received the "maximum penalty of death" for his alleged involvement in illegal sand quarrying along the Angat River.

It also named four Bulacan police officials as being involved in a supposed syndicate tolerating illegal quarrying in the town.

In San Miguel, Dante Marcial, 33, a marble quarry operator at the Biak-na-Bato and Sibul Spring mountains, was killed in an ambush at 11 a.m. Tuesday.

Marcial died instantly from at least 10 bullet wounds from an M-16 rifle.

Marcial's companion, identified only as Virgilio, a welder, was wounded and taken to a hospital in Baliuag.

Police said the attackers took Marcial's .45 cal. pistol. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

HOSTAGE-TAKING DRAMA REUTERS
Security volunteers acting out as Abu Sayyaf rebels and high school teachers reenact a hostage scene during a rally against terrrorism in Basilan.

Napocor unions raise rehiring gripes

BAGUIO CITY—Depressed but undeterred, members of unions of the National Power Corp. have elevated before the Civil Service Commission the allegedly anomalous hiring of employees for two Napocor spin-off companies.

All Napocor employees are to be terminated this week under a deregulation provision set up by the 2001 Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira).

But the government promised to absorb them into the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) and a reorganized Napocor.

However, Jimmy Salman, North Luzon president of the Napocor Employees and Workers Union (Newu), and leaders of the Napocor Employees Consolidated Union (Necu) asked the CSC to look into how the government had selected Transco's and the new Napocor's future employees.

Abner Eleria, Necu national president, said on Monday that Transco had been hiring "ineligible employees" for posts meant for Napocor veterans.

Salman said outgoing employees who applied to run state-owned power plants or regional offices have not encountered "as big a problem as Transco and the head office of a reorganized Napocor."

"They are not following the guidelines agreed upon by the Napocor board and the unions. That is what CSC should start investigating," Salman said.

"The government is treating us outgoing Napocor employees like we are no longer civil servants, when in reality, they are simply breaking up Napocor into spin off companies," he pointed out. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

ROUNDUP

Nabbed for marijuana

BAGUIO CITY—Police arrested five men in Tublay, Benguet, after their jeepney yielded 107 marijuana bricks hidden in a shipment of vegetables Tuesday. Chief Supt. Edgardo Perez, director of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in the Cordillera, identified the suspects as Loreto Gorio, Dionisio Pacateo, Teofilo Paclod, Salve Paclod and Emer Paclod, all of Kapangan, Benguet. The marijuana bricks weighed 268.4 kilograms and had an estimated street value of P5.3 million, Perez said. ***Jovelyn Reyes and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Puzzling murder

BAMBANG, Nueva Vizcaya—Police remain puzzled over the murder of a woman, whose body was found inside a hut in Barangay Barat here Monday. The body of Annette Cortez-Salindong of Barangay Banggot here had hack wounds in the neck and chest and deep cuts in the left hand. Police arrested the victim's partner, one engineer Cesar Quiben, 42, who was with her when the attack happened before Sunday midnight.
Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Cops in drug trade

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Members of the Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC) here have tagged several policemen allegedly protecting the illegal drugs trade in at least two towns in the province. The suspected drugs protectors, whose names were withheld pending an inquiry, were assigned either to the intelligence or investigation departments of police stations in Solano and Bambang towns. The disclosure was made by local reporters at the PPOC's quarterly meeting here on Feb. 14.
Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Brownout in Albay

LEGAZPI CITY—Brownout spoiled a national sports event being staged here on Tuesday. The entire province was without power starting at 1:55 p.m. Cora Racelis, National Power Corp. regional secretary, said the Albay Electric Cooperative (Aleco) had settled only P10.55 million of its P17-million account for February, prompting Napocor officials to order the disconnection. Aleco officer in charge Edgar De Guzman said the Napocor refused to accept Aleco's P7-million check that was postdated Feb. 27. The Napocor, however, later relented and took the check, resulting in the resumption of power supply at about 4 p.m.
Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Dinner for Obet

OFFICERS and members of The Quezonians, 1923 Inc., in recognition of Sec. Roberto Pagdanganan's recent appointment as agrarian reform secretary, will hold a testimonial dinner at 7 p.m. today at the Turf Room of Manila Polo Club, Makati City. The Quezonians, 1923, Inc. has been funding livelihood programs for Atimonan, Dolores, Sariaya, Candelaria, Tiaong and Infanta towns in Quezon. Beneficiaries of its medical missions are the people of Tayabas, Mauban, Lukban, Pagbilao, among other towns, according to a news release.

Victims of ferry blast long for justice

By Ryan D. Rosauro
PDI Mindanao Bureau

OZAMIZ CITY—Michael Niricua, now 24, and five other relatives from Iligan City were bound for Aloran, Misamis Occidental in the afternoon of Feb. 25, 2000, to attend the wake of a dead relative.

Also aboard the ferry, the MV Our Lady of Mediatrix, that would take them here from Lanao del Norte was a funeral service car. Had 67-year old Ismael Pinas, Niricua's uncle, known that, he could have advised them to take the next trip.

The bombing killed 39 people, injured 41 others and left 12 families still searching for missing relatives. Four charred bodies of unidentified passengers remained buried in a common grave.

According to Marivic Pinas Kaamino, another relative of Nicuria's, the funeral car was a bad omen.

As the boat was about to dock in the port here at 3:30 p.m., two bombs planted inside two Super 5 Transit buses aboard exploded, igniting fire throughout the vessel, burning to death Pinas' wife Anecita, a cousin, a sister-in-law, and two grandsons.

Anecita's charred remains was identified by her husband through her necklace and watch.

Medico-legal staff of the National Bureau of Investigation later identified Pinas' sister-in-law through DNA matching.

Niricua survived the fire, which was stoked further by a truckload of dried copra in the middle of the line of vehicles aboard the ferry.

Three years later, painful memories still pervade the victims and their families, and the cry for justice remains loud.

Three years ago, government retiree Teofilo Wagas had to cut short a long vacation in California to bid farewell to his daughter, Linda Cui, and her son Joshua, who drowned while escaping from the burning ferry.

Cui, an able swimmer, was with three children and a house help from Iligan to take advantage of the Edsa I commemoration holiday and visit her relatives here.

During the trip back home, Wagas carried a heavy heart. Today, he could only heave a sigh when asked about the incident. For hims, forgetting that nightmare is far from over. While the sad memories are hard to erase, the end could only come when justice is finally served and the perpetrators are put behind bars.

But the realization of this demand has become dimmer. Two years ago, a regional trial court here dismissed the case against two suspects for lack of evidence.

Twelve suspects were charged in connection with the incident, three of whom are leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Lanao del Norte. But only two, Allan Taratanto Saumay and Amanodin Dimalna, were placed in the custody of authorities when the case went to trial.

Public prosecutor Isabelo Villanueva said the only hope left for the continuance of the case is the arrest of the other suspects. Two years after, nothing has come out in this direction, and there are no indications there will be any.

Investigation

Several days after the bombing, Task Force Mediatrix was formed to investigate the incident. Immediately after it started work, suspects were already named and charged with the public prosecutor's office. The charges turned out to be weak, prompting the dismissal of the case as fast as they were filed.

Prosecutor Luzminda Uy recalled then that they had an inkling that the charges were meant for image building.

An interesting coincidence was the early conclusion pinning the blame on the MILF. It happened at the height of rumors of an outbreak of war on the rebel group.

The task force accused the MILF of supplying the technology to make the bomb, and that the MILF bombed the buses to sow fear on the company to further its extortion activities.

Lawyer Arthur Abundiente admitted to the INQUIRER that alleged MILF rebels had been trying to extort money from the Super 5 Transit, but the company refused to pay up. Accused were the Tomarompong brothers and cohorts.

Taking advantage of this, the military sent troops to Lanao del Norte to serve legal summons for the bombing suspects beginning early March. But Uy, whose office examined the charges, denied having issued summons during the period.

The military's entry into the Lanao del Norte hinterland communities had irritated the MILF which demanded coordination under its ceasefire agreement with the government.

If there was anything that the investigation achieved, it was "establishing the guilt" by publicity of the MILF on the bombing.

Prosecution bungled

The fixation on the MILF angle has bungled the prosecution of the case, which was based on the task force's findings.

A major flaw was alleging that Saumay's middle name is Tomarompong, which, if proven, would link him to the alleged bombers.

Saumay, a former Moro National Liberation Front commander in Lanao del Norte, showed several public documents, including a Cagayan de Oro court order with his middle name as Taratanto.

Of the 17 identified witnesses who executed sworn statements, only three appeared before the court. The fourth, a surprise witness, only brought more contradictions to the contentions of the probe team.

The trial was originally set for 10 days, but the prosecution failed to consume the entire length in presenting evidence because of the absence of witnesses. Thus, it often had to ask for the postponement of hearings.

Suspect in Tacurong bombing arrested

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police on Sunday captured one of the suspects in the Dec. 31 Tacurong City bombing that left nine civilians dead and 38 others injured.

Arrested was Mukaliden Maula Uling, alias commander Moks, 38, of Barangay Sadsalan in Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat.

His facial features matched those of one of the police artist's sketches of the four suspects in the bombing near the KCC shopping center.

Uling, who claimed he was a member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) under Commander Tong Abbas of the rebel group's 5th Battalion, was arrested at around 3 p.m. at his house.

He claimed that the MILF had a standing order to continue the war in retaliation against an attack by the military on an MILF base in the Liguasan Marsh.

The raiding team, composed of members of the Sarangani police, 601st Army Brigade, Military Intelligence Group and the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, swooped down on the house of the suspect with a warrant of arrest issued by a local court.

Uling had been the subject of a pending warrant issued by Judge Roberto Ayco of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court in Lambayong in connection with robbery and murder charges filed against him.

Uling told local journalists that he was one the four persons responsible for the Dec. 31 blast. But he said it was his companion, Toks Alib, who placed the improvised bomb on a busy sidewalk.

"I have been bothered by my conscience. I pity the civilian victims. So I decided to bare it all," Uling said.

He said he joined the Moro National Liberation Front sometime in 1978 but left the group when the MILF was created.

He said the order to bomb Tacurong reportedly came from Commander Bogs, but it was Commander Tong Abbas who supplied them the bomb.

Uling also admitted that he was a member of the MILF special operations group under Commander Tahir Alonto, leader of the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang.

He said he was willing to cooperate with police authorities and sought to become a state witness against the MILF.

Senior Supt. Nestor Sanares, Central Mindanao police chief, told reporters that Uling admitted during interrogation that he was ordered by his superiors to commit atrocities in General Santos City to derail the week-long Kalilangan celebration.

Sanares revealed that the suspect in last week's bombing in Koronadal City had alredy owned up involvement in the crime.

The suspect, a certain Edres Sabal, of Cotabato City, was brought to one of the hospitals in Koronadal after the bomb prematurely exploded in his hand.

Sanares said that aside from a bomb sketch on a piece of paper, police recovered electrical wirings and a cellular phone from Sabal.

"The information contained in the [cell phone's memory chip] confirmed that the MILF special operations group was behind the Koronadal blast," Sanares said.

He disclosed that the cell phone from the suspect was already damaged, but when the police inserted the chip in other phones, they read a text message: "*Kumusta na `yong operati* [illegible]. *Successful ba? Sumabog na ba?*" ***Aquiles Zonio with a report from Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Conciliation meet fails to end strike in Luisita

By Jo Clemente
PDI Central Luzon Desk

TARLAC CITY—A meeting initiated by the National Conciliation and Mediation Board between the management and the union of Central Azucarera de Tarlac (CAT) on Monday failed to end the three-day strike even as four of the six issues raised by the workers had been met.

The four pertained to hospitalization benefits, while the other two covered security of tenure.

The meeting was presided by Rolando Rico Olalia, NCMB executive director.

In separate interviews, Romy Ecraela, CAT corporate affairs manager, and Ricardo Ramos, CAT Labor Union (Catlu) president, said the management agreed to give full hospitalization benefits to the workers, including confinement outside the company hospital.

Ramos described the matter as the "restoration" of a benefit due to the workers under their collective bargaining agreement.

Ecraela, on the other hand, said it was a concession that the management had agreed to extend to the workers, as had been practiced in the past.

CAT workers get free hospitalization benefits from St. Martin de Porres, the company hospital located inside the Hacienda Luisita.

In instances where a worker needs to be transferred to another hospital as recommended by company doctors, free hospitalization coverage is given on a "case-by-case basis," Ramos said.

As to security of tenure issues, Ecraela said the management was willing to fill up certain vacancies, but not all. This stand failed to resolve the issue.

Still taking their "all-or-nothing" stance, the workers said they would go on with the strike but added that they were willing to sit for another round of discussions set by the NCMB today.

The workers struck on Friday midnight over accusations of unfair labor practice against the management of the Cojuangco family-owned sugar central.

The workers claimed the company violated provisions of the CBA, particularly the non-filling up of vacancies, conversion of regular positions to seasonal ones, withdrawal of free hospitalization benefits for confinement outside company hospital, and the seven-day take home medicines.

Pacificador trial to go on despite extradition denial

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A government prosecutor on Monday downplayed the ruling of the Canadian Supreme Court dismissing an appeal to an earlier ruling of a lower court that denied the government's petition to extradite Rodolfo Pacificador to the Philippines.

"There is no adverse effect on the trial of all the detained accused," said Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera III, head of the prosecution panel in the 17-year-old murder case of former Antique Gov. Evelio Javier.

Dacera said they would proceed with the trial of the accused, including Rodolfo's father, former Assemblyman Arturo Pacificador, who are detained at the Antique Provincial Jail.

Dacera said the ruling, which was handed down on Feb. 20, was "very disappointing."

"The record will bear us out that we have all the evidence pointing to the culpability of (Rodolfo) Pacificador (in the killing of Javier)," Dacera told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

First-hand knowledge

The Canadian courts, he added, did not have first-hand knowledge of the proceedings of the case.

The Canadian Supreme Court announced on its website on Feb. 21 that it had denied the Philippine government's appeal on the young Pacificador's extradition case.

The website said the full text of the decision would be posted later.

The INQUIRER on Monday called up Pacificador, who confirmed that he had received information that the government's appeal had been denied.

The Philippine government elevated to the Canadian Supreme Court its petition to extradite Rodolfo Pacificador after the Ontario Court of Appeals on Aug. 1 junked its request to send the accused back to the Philippines.

In denying the extradition, the Canadian court said sending him back to the Philippines would violate Pacificador's constitutional rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

'Serious threats'

The court believed that the younger Pacificador faced persecution and serious threats to his life if he was extradited.

"There is a tinge of ignorance on the part of the Canadian courts in handing out this decision," said Francis Gideon Javier, son of the slain governor.

But he said he could not solely blame the Canadian courts. We have brought these upon ourselves because of the long delay in the case," he added.

He said the quest for justice for his father's death would continue despite the ruling.

Elder Pacificador

The elder Pacificador hailed the ruling. "This shows that extraditing Ding (Rodolfo) is simply unacceptable to the Canadian courts because of the inconsistencies of the evidence the government has presented," he added.

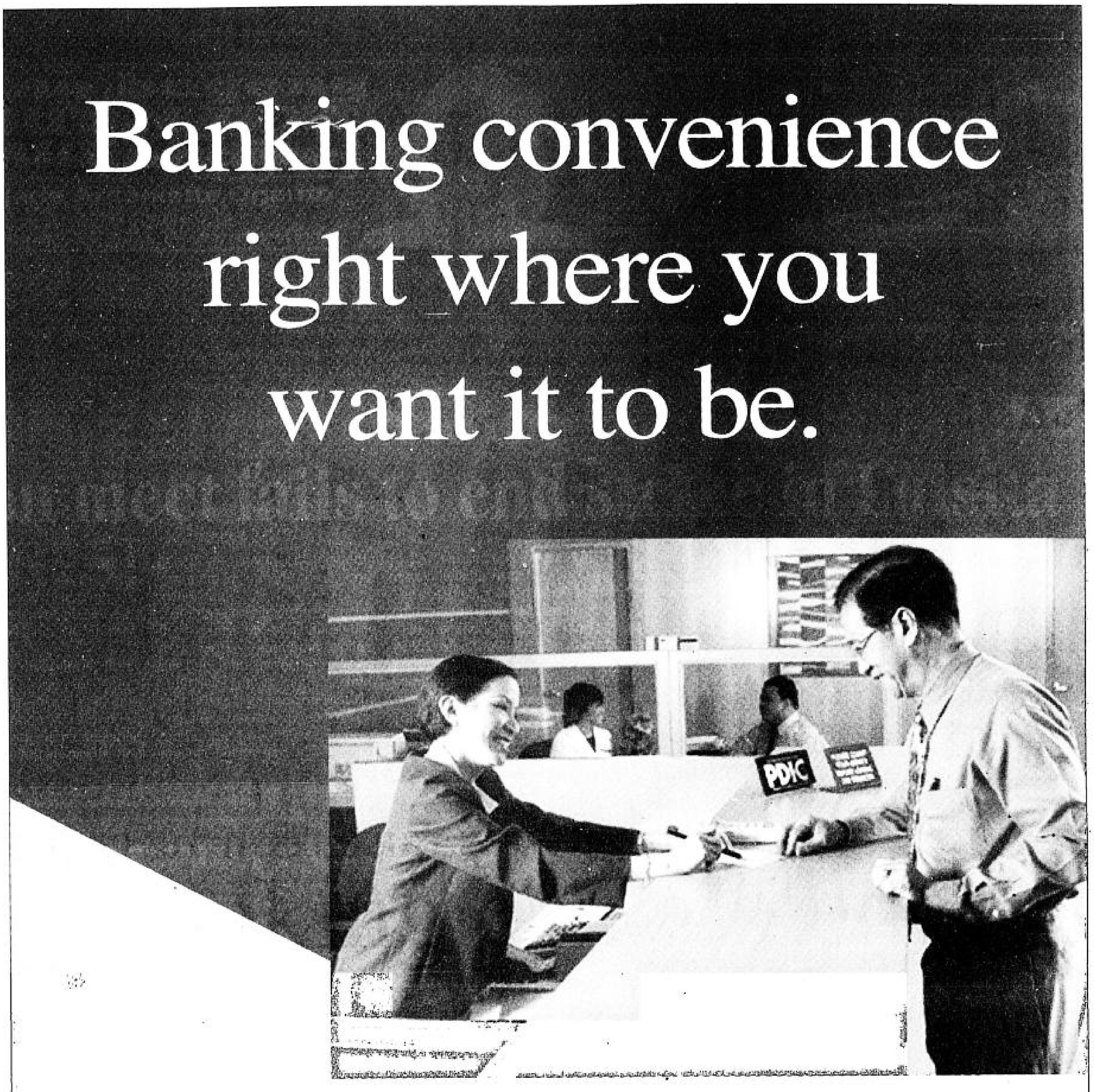
At least justice has prevailed in Canada," he said in a telephone interview.

The younger Pacificador fled to Canada in October 1987 and requested refugee status. He was detained for seven years until he was freed on bail in 1998.

The Philippine government had requested Pacificador's extradition on Sept. 10, 1991 through a diplomatic note to the Canadian government.

Heavily armed men gunned down Javier at the plaza of the capital town of San Jose on Feb. 11, 1986 during the canvassing of votes in the "snap" presidential elections. He was then a leader of the opposition against the Marcos dictatorship. The elder Pacificador, who supported Marcos has been tagged as the mastermind while his son was allegedly present during the planning of the murder.

On Jan. 3, the Antique Regional Trial Court denied bail to the Pacificadors and 16 other accused.



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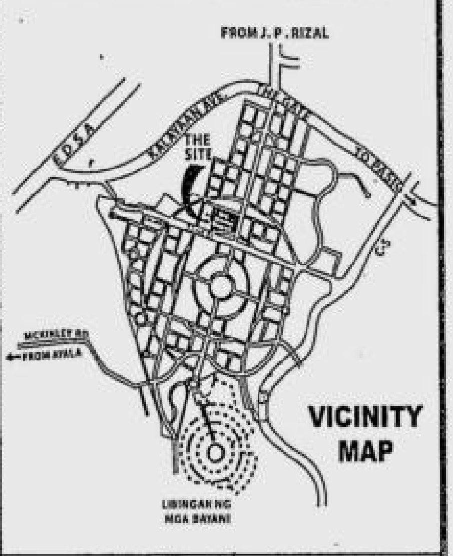

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The History of MC HOME Depot

MC Home Depot, as the name suggests is the depository of top of the line building and construction materials, home furnishing, hardware accessories and equipment as well as a wide variety of items for home building and construction needs. The store, which traces its roots from a successful business endeavor, MC Home Builders' Depot, is an enterprise which started back in 1995. Be that as it may, its growth in the industry is not only admirable but amazing as well.

The first MC Home Depot located in Makati created ripples when it transformed the dull and sluggish corner of Pasong Tamo and EDSA into a bustling and bubbly business hub flowing with activities from sun up to sun down. Aimed at providing something of value for contractors, builders, designers, home owners & other consumers alike, MC Home Depot in Makati really struggled not only to deliver the goods, so to speak, but more importantly to make available goods and services with the kind of quality that satisfies demands and expectations of its market.

With the end view of replicating its own feat, MC Home Depot once again used its Midas touch in order to turn the sleeping and unproductive corner of Ortigas and Meralco Avenues into a busy section. Sitted in a newly-built edifice on a sprawling one-hectare prime commercial lot, MC Home Depot Ortigas is committed into continuing the aspirations of its predecessor, MC Home Builders Depot. The vision? - the "agglomeration economies" aptly defined as a "variant of external economies where firm of the same industry and their consumers are benefited due to the convergence of these firms in the same location". Essentially, dovetailed with this vision is the conscientious effort and determination to give only the best to its patrons- namely, a complete line of top quality construction materials, home furnishing, hardware accessories and equipment and other home building needs.

Plainly, MC Home Depot refuses to rest on its laurels. Soon the chain of success will be carried further with the opening of MC Home Depot in Fort Bonifacio, Global City. The construction of this gigantic store started in April 2002 with a total area of three hectares. Housing more or less 100 subleases/tenants, the depot showcases a complete line of hardware equipment, home furnishing, and construction and building materials - from electrical, plumbing, locksets, paints, sanitary wares and flooring materials to almost every kind of construction & hardware materials, hence making it a lot convenient for customers.

Needless to say, with the unfolding of its new branch, MC Home Depot is ensured of a firm hold of the industry which it seeks to enhance through a clear delineation of competitiveness, pioneering initiative and adherence to the principle of agglomeration economies.

But what sets MC Home Depot apart from the rest is its uniqueness. A complete and one-stop-shop of top quality construction and building materials at competitive prices.

Undoubtedly, MC Home Depot will continue to uphold its noble commitment of serving its patron marked by excellence and distinction.

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Cordillera: Mighty land of the tribes

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE CORDILLERA Administrative Region: This is tribal land, the ancestral domain of our indigenous peoples, whose way of life is often threatened by incursions from lowlanders and corporations out to exploit their resources.

Welcome to the home of the Tingguian, Apayao, Isneg, Kalinga, Bontoc, Ifugao, Kankana-ey, Ibaloi and the Kalanguya.

The towns, especially the areas in the mountains, are bound by a *budong* (peace pact). "If they break the *budong*, there will be tribal war," warned Bas Padali Mamanteo of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Kalinga, himself a Kankana-ey from Benguet.

Some tribes are Christians but loyal to the customs and traditions of their people. "We may be Christians but we are still subject to the laws of our tribe," a young Anglican Kankana-ey friend said.

This means that in case of a tribal war, the youth may well be called from their schools or offices to join the fray.

In the cities and towns of the region, most people, especially the youth, dress just like other Filipinos. The young ones go for jeans and hamburgers, and don't want to be farmers like their parents. It is the elderly who still dress up in their traditional, colorful costumes. But often this is just for the benefit of visitors.

And, of course, they will demand a talent fee before posing for you. "I'm afraid the (foreign) tourists have spoiled them," observed a government official.

The CAR has six provinces—Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga and Mt. Province. There are many bus lines in Metro Manila (Partas, Rabbit, Autobus, etc.) that go daily to the Cordillera provinces, and there are hotels, inns and pension houses in the region's cities and towns.

Ecotourism sites

Ecotourism sites are aplenty, although it may take a day's travel to reach one destination. The CAR is recommended for the adventure tourist. There are mountains to climb (like Mt. Pulag, the highest in Luzon), rivers to cross (whitewater rafting along the Chico River), and challenging caves to explore (think Sagada).

And it's delightfully cool in the upland areas.

Abra, rugged and frontier-like, is a province of gnarled trees, cone-shaped, low-lying mountains; valleys, fields, virgin forests and a long and winding river, which empties out into the South China Sea. Raft-like structures ferry vehicles across the Abra River.

There is an underground river (Libtec) in Dolores and a small, Hidden Valley-type of resort (Borikibok) in Bucay.

Tayum, near the capital of Bangued, has a showpiece of a church and the parish priest, Renato Amasi, declares himself "a pure Tingguian."

The church faces a well-maintained plaza, which includes herbal plants, a lagoon, the Pink Sisters Convent, and a statue of Gen. Antonio Luna. In nearby Pidigan is a monument to Gabriela Silang.

North of Abra is Apayao, another "last frontier for nature's riches." Eco-destinations here recommended by the DENR and the Department of Tourism include the Apayao River and its waterfalls, the viewpoints at Pudtol and Luna, the wildlife sanctuaries at Agora and Anag-Sicapo, and the Maton Underground River.

Kalinga has a big capital, Tabuk, with a thriving trading center that is a Luzviminda melting pot. Outside the town, the mountains, valleys, caves and rice terraces beckon.

The swirling waters of the mighty Chico River, over which much blood has been spilled in the past, pass through Kalinga and are ideal for whitewater rafting.

The adventures start in Bugnay (the village of the martyred Kalinga leader Macli-ing Dulag), passing through Tabuk, Lubuagan and Tinglayan amid a panorama of nature.

We often boast that the Ifugao rice terraces are the eighth wonder of the world. Alas, this engineering marvel is threatened by erosion, breaks and rampant construction of houses. It may even be stricken from the list of Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage sites. A campaign is now under way to save the terraces.

In Mt. Province is captivating Sagada, with its spectacular mountain zigzag, caves, pine trees and vegetable valleys. Sagada must have been what Baguio was during the 1930s.

Recently, we took a trip by vehicle along the Halsema Mountain Highway, from Mt. Data (where the Chico River waters originate), Sagada and Bontoc, the provincial capital (where there's a good museum), to Baguio City (the regional capital).

We passed through zigzag trails overlooking ravines and mist-laden mountain roads, and saw red-cheeked children in red sweaters on their way to school. Then, in Benguet, we reached the sign which announced: Highest Point Philippine Highway System. Elevation: 7,400 feet.

Around us were mountains, grassy knolls, trees, and cloud-tipped peaks.

That was another nice experience in Cordillera land.

IFUGAO men dance during a *cañao* (feast).

BENJIE ESPARTERO

Why festivals are here to stay

By Frank Cimatu
Laoag City

PAUL Temporal's 1999 book, "Branding in Asia: The Creation, Development and Management of Asian Brands for the Global Market," has made a big dent in the Asian consciousness and it is inevitable that Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon will take notice of it.

The book tries to demolish the colonial mentality pervasive not only in the Philippines but in other countries as well. "It is time for Asian brands to build on the natural differentiation of Asian products in a global market," Temporal said.

Taking its cue from "Branding Asia," the Department of Tourism has encouraged the holding of festivals all over the country, playing on each town's strengths and nuances.

Thus we have the Tultugan Festival in Maasin, Leyte; Maytinis Festival in Kawit, Cavite; Coffee Festival in Lipa City; Bulaklakan Festival in Muntinlupa City; Coconut Festival in San Pablo City; Sambalilo Festival in Paranaque; Alimango Festival in Lala, Lanao del Norte; Banana Festival in Baco, Oriental Mindoro and in La Castellana, Negros Occidental; Tinalak Festival in Koronadal City; Tampisaw Festival in Concepcion, Iloilo; Mudpack Festival in Murcia, Negros Occidental; Mango Festival in Guimaras, and many more.

In Northern Luzon, we have the Bangus Festival in Dagupan City; Puto Festival in Calasiao, Pangasinan; Garlic Festival in Sinait, Ilocos Sur; Longaniza Festival in Vigan City; and the Pamulinawen Festival in Laoag City.

The Longaniza Festival, held in the last week of January, featured street performers and officials in Vigan wearing strands of uncooked *chorizo* (sausage).

The Bangus Festival, to be held from April 28 to May 1, will reprise the longest *bangus* (milkfish) grill, the 101 ways to cook *bangus* and the *bangus* harvest dance.

The Pamulinawen Festival, held from Feb. 2-11 in time for Laoag's fiesta, honored town patron St. William the Hermit.

Sinait's Garlic Festival on May 1-3 will honor the "white gold" of Ilocos Sur.

These festivals complement established those in the North, including the Arya Abra in Bangued, Abra on March 7-11; Guling-Guling Festival on March 5 in Paoay, Ilocos Norte; Pangasinan's Pista'y Dayat on May 1; and, of course, the Baguio Flower Festival or Panagbenga.

"We look up to Baguio for tourist promotion," said Chona Fariñas, Laoag tourism coordinator and chair of the Pamulinawen Festival.

Laoag has become aggressive for this year's Pamulinawen. The founding of Laoag was reenacted on stage for the first time. Not content with just one festival, the city is also staging the Kalesa Festival, Tinudok Festival (after the popular rice delicacy), Basi (sugarcane wine) Festival and the Rakit (bamboo raft) Festival.

But all these festivals wished they had Panagbenga's logistics.

Though only on its eighth year, Panagbenga has become popular that last weekend's street dancing and floral float parade were watched by more than 100,000 people.

Fariñas hoped that tourists would also visit the other festivals in the North, considering that the dates are near. As it is, Pamulinawen had a fair share of tourists from Taiwan and China, including Hong Kong, who vacationed during the Chinese New Year festivities from Feb. 1 to 8.

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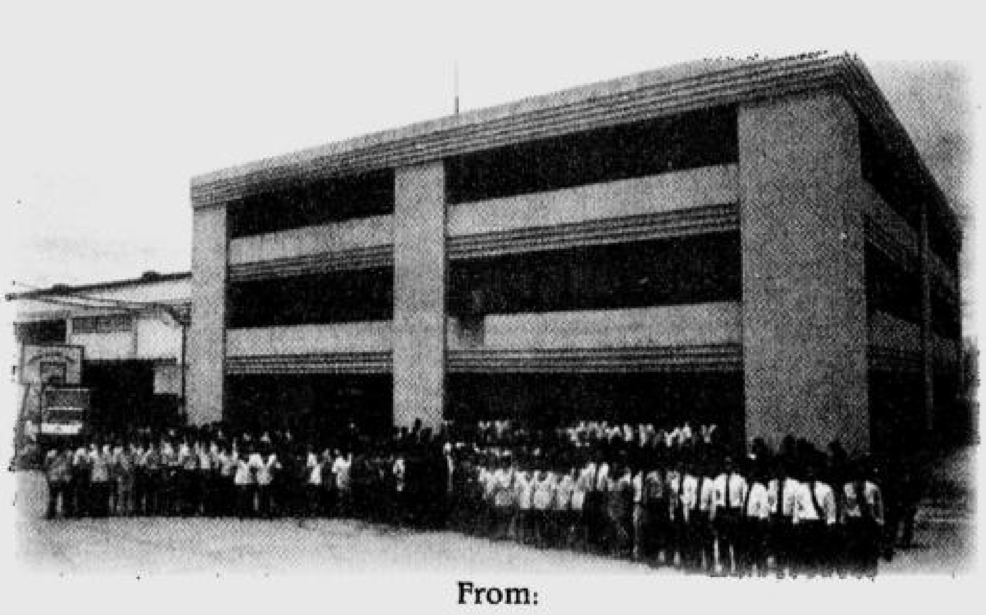

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Where are the people?

From page A1

President.

The absence of a crowd reflected the mood of the day, a public holiday.

In his homily during the noon Mass at the Edsa Shrine, Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin lamented the fact that 17 years after People Power I, peace and "economic democracy" continued to elude the Philippines.

"Is there nothing left of the Edsa revolution, except the myth?" he said.

"We can hardly call our nation a model for peace-loving nations," Sin said. "We can hardly claim the title of being the example in the family of nations in sustaining our democracy. We are not. There can only be political democracy through a well-grounded economic democracy."

By Reuters' estimate, the Mass was attended by around 500 people led by President Macapagal-Arroyo, who had just arrived from Kuala Lumpur where she attended the Non-Aligned Movement summit.

But the Philippine National Police fielded some 600 riot cops and members of Special Weapons and Action Teams from the Central and Eastern Police Districts.

In remarks delivered at the end of the Mass, former President Corazon Aquino expressed her frustration.

"We find our people today tired and disillusioned, desperate for the magic formula that will bring back the glory of February 1986 when we became the darlings of the world," said Aquino, who took power after Marcos fled to Hawaii, where he died in 1989.

Still, she said, it was a "false impression" that Edsa I could solve all the country's ills. She said people could make it relevant "by doing what we can, every day in any way, to make things right."

"In the end," she added, "people power is about assuming responsibility for ourselves and for others."

Sought for comment on Sin's homily, Vice President Teofisto Guingona said Ms Macapagal should now concentrate on improving the lives of the poor, and not on waging war. He was referring to the President's 'hawkish stance vis-a-vis the US-Iraq conflict as well as the communist and secessionist rebellions in the country.

"Domestic policy should extend to foreign affairs, not the other way around," Guingona said.

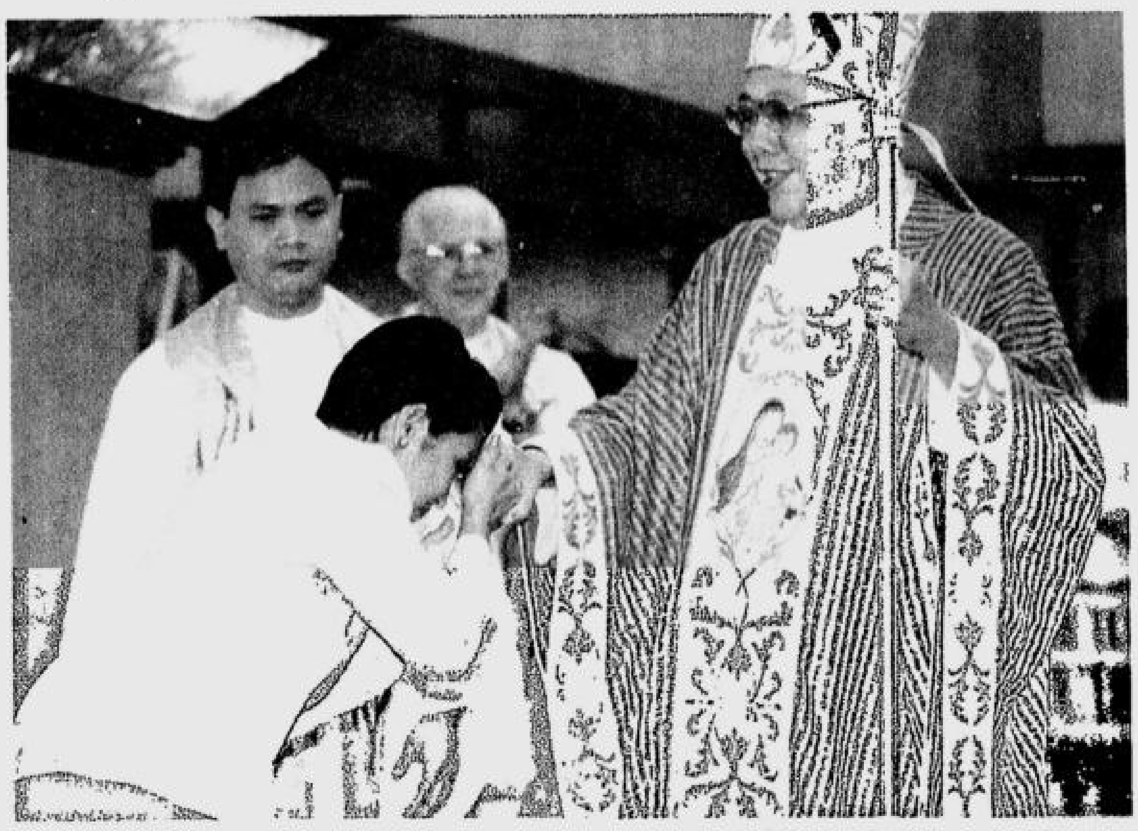
Forgotten

Ramos assailed the authorities' apparent disinterest in the Edsa anniversary: "*Sayang naman at nakalimutan ng mga lider natin kung ano ang dapat gawin sa araw na ito* (It's too bad that our leaders have forgotten what we celebrate today)."

He told reporters, however, that he would still attend next year's commemoration. "I hope some of you will be here because the Edsa People Power Commission (PPC) that was established by a presidential order has institutionalized this event," he said.

But Dodi Limcaoco, Ms Macapagal's adviser on ecclesiastical affairs, said the commission in charge of the yearly commemoration should be congratulated "for a job well-done and for a simple but meaningful celebration despite limited resources."

Limcaoco said that contrary to Ramos' comments, "the events were given importance."



A GOOD daughter of the church, President Macapagal attends Mass said by Cardinal Sin at the Edsa Shrine in observance of the 17th anniversary of the Edsa Revolt I. JOAN BONDOC

He also said Church officials had wanted the celebration to be peaceful and politics-free: "They wanted religious events, which included a Mass, inside the shrine. We respected that."

But Ramos said that "with due respect to everybody," the occasion was "not to be celebrated with just religious activities" because "Edsa I and II were upheavals and uprisings by the people regardless of religious affiliation."

It was initially thought that Ramos, a Protestant, would not attend the Mass at the Edsa Shrine. But he arrived halfway into the ritual.

Among the other officials present at the Mass were Senate President Franklin Drilon, Public Works Secretary Bayani Fernando, Agriculture Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, and PPC co-chairs Vicky Garchitorena and Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Garchitorena and Romulo left the shrine shortly after the Mass and did not speak with reporters.

Chief Supt. Reynaldo Velasco, deputy director of the National Capital Region Police Office, said the situation was peaceful and under control.

Around 100 members of the militant group Sanlakas massed in Cubao but were prevented from marching to the Edsa Shrine.

Riot police stood guard against protesters in Cubao, in front of Camp Crame, on White Plains Avenue and at the gate of the Corinthian Gardens subdivision.

Paralysis

Sin noted how at each Edsa anniversary, the people were led to say that they should do something about the country's ills, only to forget their words later.

"Until when shall we allow our analysis to lead us to paralysis?" he said. "There is not much more time. Our inconclusive congressional debates must end. The stalemate of conflicting private interests must stop. Time is running out."

The cardinal said that while the Edsa anniversary called for a celebration, he was sad because Filipinos seemed to "specialize in tearing one another and bringing ourselves down."

"But if we concentrate on tearing down, we will have no energy left for building up," he said.

He also said it was time for the people to honestly work to improve their lives.

"We dream of people setting aside destructive factionalism and working together, to make economic democracy and political democracy truly the first priority in our agenda," the Cardinal added.

Aquino said there was no shortage of Filipino heroes. She cited the taxi driver and security guard who returned money they had found, as well as Ernest "Che" Guevarra, a young physician working with families displaced by the fighting in North Cotabato, who recently earned the Reebok Human Rights Award for 2003.

"All is not lost in our society," she said.

Valid concerns

Pastor "Boy" Saycon, an occasional critic of the Macapagal administration and himself a PPC member, said Ramos' concerns were "valid."

"Why can't we celebrate Edsa peacefully while giving it the importance it deserves?" he told reporters after the Mass.

Saycon noted the omission of "regular programs" included in previous celebrations, such as the wreath-laying ceremonies at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

"Even the planning for the flag-raising was late. Initially, there was no proposal with the board," he said.

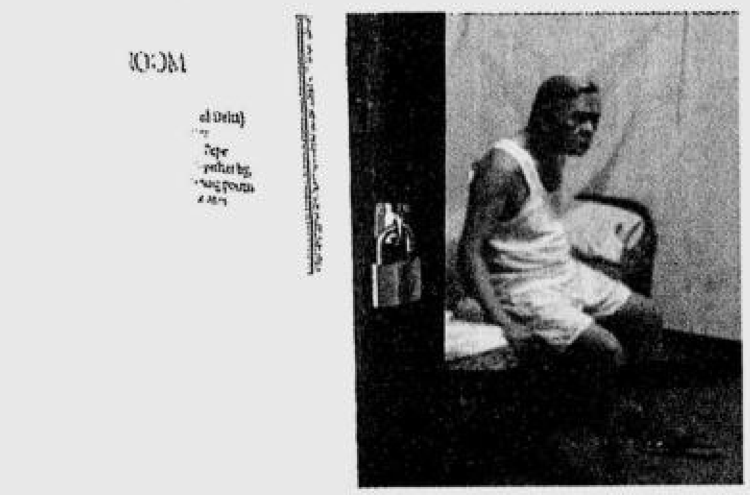
He added: "The celebrations are important and we should recognize the unity shown at Edsa I [among] the Church, the military and the people. The government should take care of the participation of the people."

Rick Samaniego, another PPC member, admitted the lack of preparations. But he said this was because PPC head Chris Carreon resigned for personal reasons on Jan. 10, and Garchitorena was laid low by surgery at around the time.

Samaniego said the commission wanted a "simple and peaceful commemoration."

He also said "everyone" was invited to attend the celebration "as long as they don't bring placards and megaphones."

CODENAMED Alpha, Ninoy Aquino was kept in solitary confinement in this cell which is now part of a National Shrine complex. VAL HANDUMON



NOT knowing day from night, a wax figure of Diokno approximates his dismal physical condition. VAL HANDUMON

Aquino, Diokno cells now a shrine to heroism

From page A1

about 150 meters from the camp's main gate.

At the outset of martial rule, Aquino and Diokno were arrested in Metro Manila and detained in Camp Crame. Six months later on March 12, 1973, they were brought to the military camp here. They were kept in solitary confinement.

They stood up to Marcos

Former President Corazon Aquino said she agreed with Diokno that the memorial for the two former senators, both leading figures in the fight against the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos' martial rule, was not only for "Pepe and Ninoy, but for all of us Filipinos."

"We look for heroes and so here are these two men who were ready and willing to sacrifice everything so that we could enjoy our freedom and restore democracy in our country," Aquino said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo inaugurated the shrine, which used to house the military security detachment of the Army's Military Security Unit in this 35,000-hectare military reservation.

In their respective cells, measuring 3 by 4 meters each, Diokno and Aquino never knew whether it was night or day as lights in the facility were on 24 hours a day.

Their wives were allowed to see their husbands starting only on April 8, 1973. The two women said they never had the chance to touch their husbands as they were not allowed to enter the facility, which was secured by barbed wire.

HEROES' widows, Carmen Diokno (back to camera) and former President Cory Aquino tour the Aquino-Diokno memorial complex, inaugurated by President Macapagal in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija. Also in photo is Cory's former PSG chief, now Ambassador Voltaire Gazmin. VAL HANDUMON

GMA order

Maj. Gen. Alberto Braganza, commanding general of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, said Ms Macapagal ordered him last year to reconstruct the building for a memorial to Aquino and Diokno.

Braganza said Ms Macapagal issued the order during her visit to the Ninoy Aquino Museum in Tarlac City on Dec. 17 last year.

"The command is deeply proud and honored to be part of this celebration. It has been a dream of past 7th ID commanders for this memorial to be set up. Now it is realized and we are lucky this happened during our time," Braganza said.

Militants avoid clash with cops, boycott Edsa

From page A1

that the government has made of the Edsa anniversary," Bayan secretary general Teodoro Casiño said.

He said the deployment of hundreds of policemen around the Edsa Shrine was "the ultimate insult" to those who fought "political repression under the Marcos dictatorship."

"If police and bureaucrats want to arrogate Edsa unto themselves, they can go ahead," Casiño said. "*Sawang sawa na kaming itinataboy sa* Edsa (We're tired of being pushed away from Edsa)."

In last month's commemoration of People Power II, members of Bayan and its allied groups were prevented from marching to Edsa by police wielding shields and truncheons. A water cannon was later used against the crowd, which included Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Fr. Joe Dizon.

Members of Bayan's rival groups, Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) and Sanlakas, pushed through with their protest march yesterday.

But police stopped them as soon as they reached Camp Crame, where they were told that they could proceed only if they left their streamers and placards behind.

"What's the use of going to the Edsa Shrine if we cannot bring the banners that bear our calls and sentiments?" Sanlakas president Wilson Fortaleza said.

He said Sanlakas, as well as the FDC and other groups, Partido ng Manggagawa and Kalayaan, was marching to protest "the wrong policies and priorities being pursued" by President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

"We call on the government to address the economic burdens besetting our poor people rather than waste time and resources in rendering support to the senseless US war on Iraq," Fortaleza said.

"If GMA still recognizes the spirit of people power, she must declare war against the purchased power adjustment, reverse the privatization of water services and re-channel the debt service budget to social services," he said.

The Promotion for Church People's Response (PCPR) said the President had "no moral authority" to attend the Edsa rites and prayer rallies for peace because of "her failure to make good on her promises to achieve peace and economic progress" for the country.

PCPR spokesperson Rev. Fr. Allan Jose Arcebuche said Iglesia ni Cristo Executive Minister Eraño Manalo was "absolutely right in criticizing the sheer hypocrisy of GMA" in attending Sunday's prayer rally for peace at the Quirino Grandstand.

Tiglao has upper hand in Malacanang turf war

From page A1

Tiglao is reportedly signing up Renato Velasco, director general of the Public Information Agency, as his senior deputy chief of staff, and Press Undersecretary Roberto Capco and Press Assistant Secretary Ricky Alfonso as his deputy chiefs.

Velasco, Capco and Alfonso—all under the office of Press Secretary Hernani Braganza, who has a simmering feud with Tiglao over turf—will hold the rank of undersecretaries.

Under Administrative Order No. 62, President Macapagal-Arroyo has granted Tiglao, her former spokesperson and press secretary, broad powers that range from managing her day-to-day schedule, public communications, strategic planning and policy formulation to monitoring government programs and projects.

Pushing papers

Tiglao can also "call upon" any government agency and all heads of departments, agencies, bureaus and offices, including government-owned or controlled corporations "to render full assistance and cooperation."

Some Palace insiders, however, said that Tiglao's role as chief of staff should be limited to pushing papers in the President's private office.

"It appears that Tiglao may be eating into the turf of Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo," a Malacañang source said.

The source noted that "there may be problems" with the wording of AO 62 that seemed to grant Tiglao control over the offices of Braganza and of presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

The order said that Tiglao "shall coordinate" the two offices "for the purpose of formulating and implementing the President's public communications programs."

It didn't say "coordinate with," a phrase that implies cooperation with a co-equal office.

This matter is likely to bring out in the open the unresolved question, "Who is the head of the President's 'communications group?'"

Advisory group

The communications advisory group is composed of Braganza, Bunye, Tiglao, Romulo, Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino Cruz, Presidential Adviser for Media and Ecclesiastical Affairs Conrado Limcaoco, public relations practitioners Antony Abaya and Bubot Quicho, former Trade Undersecretary Tomas Alcantara, Palace pollster Jun Laylo, and former Health Undersecretary Mario Taguiwalo.

The group was formed after Ms Macapagal's private publicist Dante Ang started distancing himself from the Palace.

One version says that Tiglao is the overall communications director, a post which he reassumed after he returned from a fellowship in Japan last year.

A second version states that Alcantara, who is personally close to the First Couple, is the head of the communications group.

Still a third version says that Romulo is on top of the communications group, with Braganza and Bunye playing the lead roles in implementing programs.

"This mix-up is one reason why the President's communications program doesn't seem to be taking off," the source said. "It's too disorderly."

'All with firearms must fight till death'

From page A1

his followers by saying "many have asked where I am."

"I am here, I would never leave you. I have been in exile for 10 years, that's enough. I will stay with you as long as I am alive," Salamat said.

"I would like to inform all Bangsamoro people, children, mothers, young ones and adults that I am more than willing to die fighting for our rights in Mindanao," he continued.

"I repeat, there's no ceasefire, there are no peace talks right now," he said, his voice cracking.

Blatant disrespect

The Egyptian-educated Salamat, the elusive founder and spiritual leader of the Moro separatist group, said peace talks had bogged down because of government's blatant disrespect for previous agreements.

"Despite the ceasefire agreement, despite previous accords, the government continued to attack our mujahedeens, a clear show of disrespect and human rights violations," Salamat said.

He did not clearly state his conditions for returning to the negotiating table, but he hinted that the Bangsamoro people should be allowed to run their own affairs.

"Think how many we are, I think we are more than 10 million (in the Philippines)," he said.

He cited the case of East Timor, where some two million East Timorese gained independence by fighting and offering their lives.

"We have the same case as in East Timor," he said. "We can also offer our lives in order to gain independence."

"This means that if we do not fight for our rights to the last drop of our blood, we will never attain independence," he said.

"Remember, our lives will remain miserable unless we become free and independent," Salamat said.

After the fall of Buliok complex and the capture of Salamat's alleged "mansion" in Pikit after only a week of fighting, the MILF has launched various small-scale counteroffensives, in Tulunan and Carmen in North Cotabato, in Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat, and in Matanog, Maguindanao.

Pikit fighting

New fighting flared up in Pikit on Monday, with the Armed Forces saying four MILF rebels were killed while two soldiers were wounded.

Col. Carduzo Luna, 602nd Infantry Brigade chief, said the 40th Infantry Battalion clashed with a combined group of MILF and Pentagon kidnap gang members in Barangay Dalengaoen and Talakakan.

The firefight started at 9 a.m. and ended at 3 p.m., with the military using two MG-520 attack helicopters.

But Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the rebels actually ambushed a convoy of government troops in Dalengaoen, killing six soldiers and wounding two others. "No casualty was reported on our side," he said.

"We have intensified our offensive because there is no ceasefire yet," Kabalu told the INQUIRER.

Luna said residents reported the presence of armed men in Dalengaoen at 8:30 a.m. on Monday. The rebels traded mortar fire and gunfire with the soldiers, triggering a running gun battle.

"We later learned that the group was led by Commander Pakil Ayunan of the MILF-Pentagon group," Luna told reporters.

The authorities have tagged Ayunan, North Cotabato's most wanted man who carries a P250,000 bounty on his head, as the brains of two massacres in Carmen town.

"He used to hide in Buliok complex, that is why he has not been heard from since the twin massacres. Now that the complex is in government control, he has gone somewhere else," Luna said.

Ayunan allegedly led a band of gunmen who flagged down a passenger jeepney in Barangay Cadis in Carmen in 2000, killing at least 16 civilians.

In 1998, also in Carmen, he allegedly led the massacre of 18 civilians in a remote farming village.

More attacks

Meanwhile, reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo said four people were killed, a bus was burned and three National Power Corp. towers were sabotaged by the MILF over the weekend.

A passenger bus was torched on Sunday by five suspected MILF members in Barangay Fuentes, Pantukan, Compostela Valley.

This was followed by the burning of two NPC posts in Barangays Macasampan and Tambunan in Talayan, Maguindanao.

On Monday, two Cafgu regulars and two civilians were killed and two others were wounded when a security detail of logging firm Dacon Forest was ambushed at the boundary of Guban and Kaluyan villages in Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte.

The dead were identified as Rene Sonorio and Fernando Clog; the two wounded were identified as Reynaldo Alvarez and Jerry Tomala.

The victims were on board a motorcycle and had just come from Vitali, Zamboanga City, when they were ambushed by about 30 MILF members headed by Hairon Hassan.

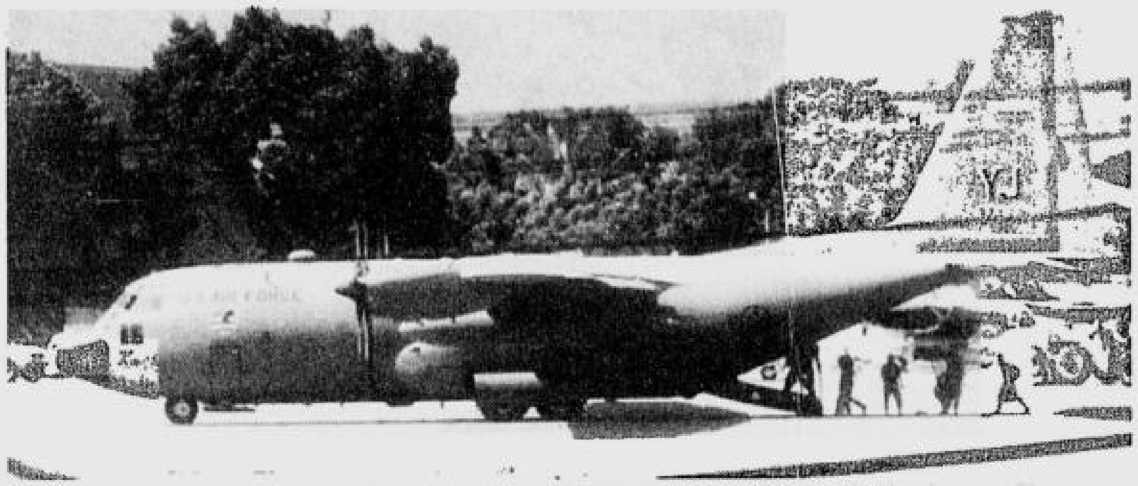
The ambush was followed by the toppling of an NPC tower in Barangay Patani, Marawi City, Lanao del Sur.

Yesterday, the MILF stepped up their attacks when they opened fire on elements of the 75th Infantry Battalion.

The government troops were conducting combat patrol in Sitio Pontor, Buldon, Maguindanao when they encountered about 50 MILF men. Army spokesperson Maj. Julieto Ando said five rebels were killed and one soldier was wounded in the encounter. *With a report from Martin Marfil; AFP*

Reyes for putting GIs in Sulu on hold

From page A1



MORE elite US Special Forces arrive on Tuesday at the Edwin Andrew Air Base in Zamboanga City reportedly to train local troops to combat the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf. AFP

would be Philippine-led and US-supported.

"We don't envision US forces being in charge, calling the shots," Reyes said. But he admitted that the Armed Forces needed the Americans to defeat the rebels. "We need help," he said. "We're doing the job the best way we can, but definitely we are (without) the equipment that we need."

In Washington, Pentagon spokesperson Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis acknowledged that discussions were continuing but indicated Monday that the exercises were ready to proceed.

Reyes insisted that terms of US involvement had yet to be worked out. "That's what we will discuss (with Rumsfeld)," he said.

On the Philippine side, he said, three criteria must be met: No offensive combat role for US troops, the Americans acting in a supporting role led by Filipinos, and no actions that violate Philippine law.

On the American side, he said, there are concerns over force protection and the right US soldiers have to defend themselves.

Reyes said he had an "intense discussion" with Fargo, but did not disclose details.

Definitions

Ricciardone said the current controversy may be traced to a confusion in the terms used to describe the scheduled exercises in Sulu.

"We call it an operation, you call it an exercise. So there are two sides," the ambassador said.

Several weeks after the US Embassy referred all questions on US involvement to the US Defense Department spokesperson, Ricciardone yesterday finally confirmed that the United States would take part in Balikatan 03-1, but not in a way that would violate the Constitution.

He also dismissed the pronouncements emanating from the Pentagon, quoted last week by the New York Times, the Washington Post and CNN, as unofficial.

"It's a little difficult for me to respond to people who don't hold themselves accountable and don't speak on the record, these people who are allegedly from the Pentagon," Ricciardone said over radio station dzMM.

The unnamed Pentagon officials were quoted as saying that US personnel would be involved in combat against the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu and that military hardware was already underway to solve the terrorist menace.

"What I can tell you is what (White House spokesperson) Ari Fleisher said on Friday that the US has agreed to have US forces support operations led by the AFP against the Abu Sayyaf. That's what we had agreed in principle at very high levels of our governments," Ricciardone said.

He said that his country respected the leadership of President Macapagal-Arroyo and would not do anything to violate her trust.

"Can you imagine us coming here and violating a sacred agreement with her? It's unthinkable on our side... We will never do that," Ricciardone said. Foreign Undersecretary Amado Valdez, chief of the Visiting Forces Agreement Commission that monitors the conduct of US forces in the country, said US troops "may be involved in operations" but not in the "actual fighting."

"They may be involved but only in support and in assistance of the Filipino troops who will be fighting the Abu Sayyaf. Perhaps, there is a confusion in the terms involved," Valdez said.

Opposition

Two senators urged the President to immediately suspend the holding of the exercises and stop the deployment of American forces in Sulu.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said the United States will only use the military exercises to promote its war agenda in the Middle East. "It sends the wrong signal given the ongoing worldwide opposition to war. This doesn't serve Philippine interests," Pangilinan said .

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the President should ask Reyes to stop the plan to deploy American troops to Sulu.

"There is still time for the President to stop this madness sending American troops in the guise of Balikatan exercises to go to Sulu which has been the hotbed of Muslim insurgency since time immemorial," Pimentel said.

"Sulu will be a tough nut to crack. Sulu is not Basilan because not only the Abu Sayyaf, but also the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Moro National Liberation Front and other armed groups are there," he said.

At a peace forum at the University of the Philippines in Los Banos, Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. said the Philippines should not act as America's lackeys.

"Although we are bound by some treaties, the Filipino people will not bow to any men because we are free. We may be allies to US, but we are definitely not their servants," Guingona said. *With reports from Cynthia Balana; Marlon Ramos and Clarice Colting, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Gas to cost ₱26 per liter once US-Iraq war erupts

From page A1

Petron's unleaded gasoline is currently retailed at P20.33 per liter and its Blaze at P21.50 per liter.

She based the P6-increase in pump prices on a possible $20-rise in the cost of Dubai crude, which is currently about $30 per barrel.

In a telephone interview, Ruivivar said world prices would have to be reflected in local prices.

Energy Undersecretary Ben-Hur Salcedo said the government would have to limit the fuel consumption of motorists if Mahathir's projection came true.

"Based on our energy contingency plans, fuel allocation will be implemented according to the reduction in the country's oil inventory," Salcedo said.

A 20-percent reduction in inventory means that purchases of motorists will be recorded to ensure that their average daily consumption is also reduced by a fifth, according to Salcedo.

Salcedo said fuel purchase records would be issued to motorists. The filling stations would use the purchase records to determine whether vehicle owners were still entitled to buy fuel for the day based on an index of average daily consumption for each vehicle type.

At present, the country has a total inventory good for 70 days. The Department of Energy has ordered oil refiners to maintain a minimum inventory of 30 days. Small oil companies are required to keep supplies good for at least 15 days.

"There is nothing we can do about (rising crude prices), because we buy from the international market," Salcedo said.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said the Philippine government would have ample oil supply if war in Iraq broke out.

In a statement, Ople said officials of Saudi Arabia had assured Philippine officials of regular supply of oil at a bilateral meeting on the margins of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

Ople met with Saudi Minister of State Dr. Maciani Al Aqui and Prince Turki. "There is a surplus of oil and steps can be taken to increase production when needed," Prince Turki said.

Roberto Kanapi, general manager of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., said global oil production may not be severely affected by a war in the Middle East. But the country must ensure that it has adequate supply, he said.

Kanapi said Shell would tap its "alternative sources" of crude should war erupt in the Middle East.

Ruivivar does not see a disruption of supply globally. "But a war in Iraq will push prices up," she said. "The question is whether people can still afford fuel."

Ruivivar said people would have to conserve fuel and avoid using their vehicles if the cost of crude rose to $50 per barrel.

"The government wants to avert this, but the question is how," she said.

Saddam refuses to destroy missiles

From page A1

Russia and China backed the Franco-German proposal.

In Kuala Lumpur, leaders of the developing world on Tuesday stepped up behind Iraq on the final day of the Non-Aligned Movement summit. Kings, president and ministers of a bloc, which accounts for two-thirds of the United Nations and 55 percent of the world's population, took turns lashing out at US domineering and aggression.

Saddam remained defiant even after Turkey's Cabinet on Monday agreed to host tens of thousands of US troops, a key step toward allowing Washington to push ahead with plans for a northern front against Iraq. US forces have massed in Kuwait, which borders Iraq in the south.

US, French proposals

The US-British and Franco-German proposals are different in form as well as content. The US-British draft resolution, supported by Spain, does not specify what action to take on Iraq. Implicitly, however, it seeks council authority to use military force against Iraq on the grounds that Iraq is "in material breach of its obligations" under previous UN resolutions.

If put to a vote and adopted by the Security Council, the resolution would have the force of international law binding on all states. Washington, however, has reserved the right to wage war even without UN support.

The Franco-German proposal, presented in the form of a memorandum, is not meant to be put to the vote but to influence the outcome of negotiations on the US draft. The proposal seeks to extend UN inspections beyond July 1 when the heat would make fighting more difficult.

After two and a half hours of closed-door discussions, Security Council president Gunther Pleuger of Germany said members would again meet Thursday to consider both proposals.

Top UN inspector Hans Blix is scheduled to issue his next report on Iraq's cooperation on March 1 and is expected to brief the council on March 7. American and British diplomats say they expect the council to decide on the resolution shortly afterward.

Daunting task

Getting approval for the US-backed resolution will be a daunting task. To pass, the resolution must have nine "yes" votes and avoid a veto by France, Russia or China. Only Bulgaria is considered a strong bet to support the Americans, British and Spanish.

Eleven of the 15 council members have endorsed continued weapons inspections, but the United States has dispatched top negotiators to the capitals of Security Council members in recent days to push for the resolution.

SADDAM

For some of the countries, such as Angola, Guinea and Cameroon—poor African nations whose concerns drew little attention before they landed seats on the council—supporting the resolution may reap financial benefits from the United States.

US officials said many of the negotiations on the latest draft would take place at a high level in capitals, rather than among ambassadors at the United Nations.

Despite the stiff resistance in the council, US President George W. Bush told US governors earlier Monday that the resolution "spells out what the world has witnessed the last months. The Iraq regime has not disarmed."

Top UN inspectors Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei agree that Iraq still isn't fully cooperating or providing evidence to answer outstanding questions about its weapons programs. Blix, who was to meet again Tuesday with his advisory board, was working on a list of disarmament tasks Iraq has yet to fulfill.

Major test

A major test will come Saturday when Iraq is required to begin destroying all of Iraq's Al Samoud 2 missiles, which Blix said go beyond the 150-km range limit set by the Security Council in resolutions adopted after the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

But in an interview with CBS anchor Dan Rather to be aired Wednesday, Saddam indicated he did not intend to destroy the banned missiles. CBS quoted Saddam as saying: "Iraq is allowed to prepare proper missiles and we are committed to that."

Saddam flatly denied that his Al-Samoud 2 missiles violated UN restrictions and challenged Bush to join him in a live radio and television satellite linkup to debate the need for war before the world.

"I am ready to conduct a direct dialogue— a debate — with your President. I will say what I want and he will say what he wants," Saddam said.

The White House dismissed the offer. "It's definitely not a serious statement. There can be no debating the need for Saddam Hussein to disarm," said White House spokesperson Scott McClellan.

Non-Aligned Movement

In Kuala Lumpur, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe opened proceedings on the second and final day of the triennial NAM summit with a blistering attack on the United States and Bush as a "big brother" proliferating arms and on British Prime Minister Tony Blair as a neo-colonialist.

The United States should set an example by being the first to destroy its enormous stocks of weapons, said Mugabe, who has been vilified as a "monster" in the British press.

"Iraq might have developed or desired to develop arms of mass destruction," he said. "But the United States has massive arms of that magnitude. Why can't they demonstrate what Iraq should (do) by destroying their own massive heaps first?"

Syria, the only Arab member in the 15-member Security Council, said it would vote against the US-British draft resolution.

"There is no justification for suggesting any draft. The inspectors are doing their work in implementation of Resolution No. 1441," Vice President Abdel-Halim Khaddam told Reuters. "Therefore, we do not agree with this draft."

NAM's views on the Iraqi crisis matter because five other members are currently on the Security Council—Angola, Guinea, Chile, Pakistan and Cameroon. Seven votes can defeat a resolution.

"Ferocious bulldogs"

The NAM speeches maintained the theme of opposition to war while urging Iraq to comply with UN resolutions and get rid of any weapons of mass destruction.

The United States, Britain and the West "have turned themselves into ferocious hunting bulldogs raring to go as they sniff for more blood, Third World blood," Mugabe told the 116-member movement. "We, their hunted game, are for slaughter."

Cuba leader Fidel Castro attacked Bush's doctrine of preemptive strikes and warned that the world was at risk of extinction due to the "insane" behavior of rich nations.

"For the first time, the human species is running a real risk of extinction due to the insane behavior . . . Only we can save humanity ourselves with the support of millions of manual and intellectual workers from the developed nations who are conscious of the catastrophes befalling their peoples," he said. *Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*

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RECORD FIELD

PAL Interclub unfolds today

By Al S. Mendoza
Sports Editor

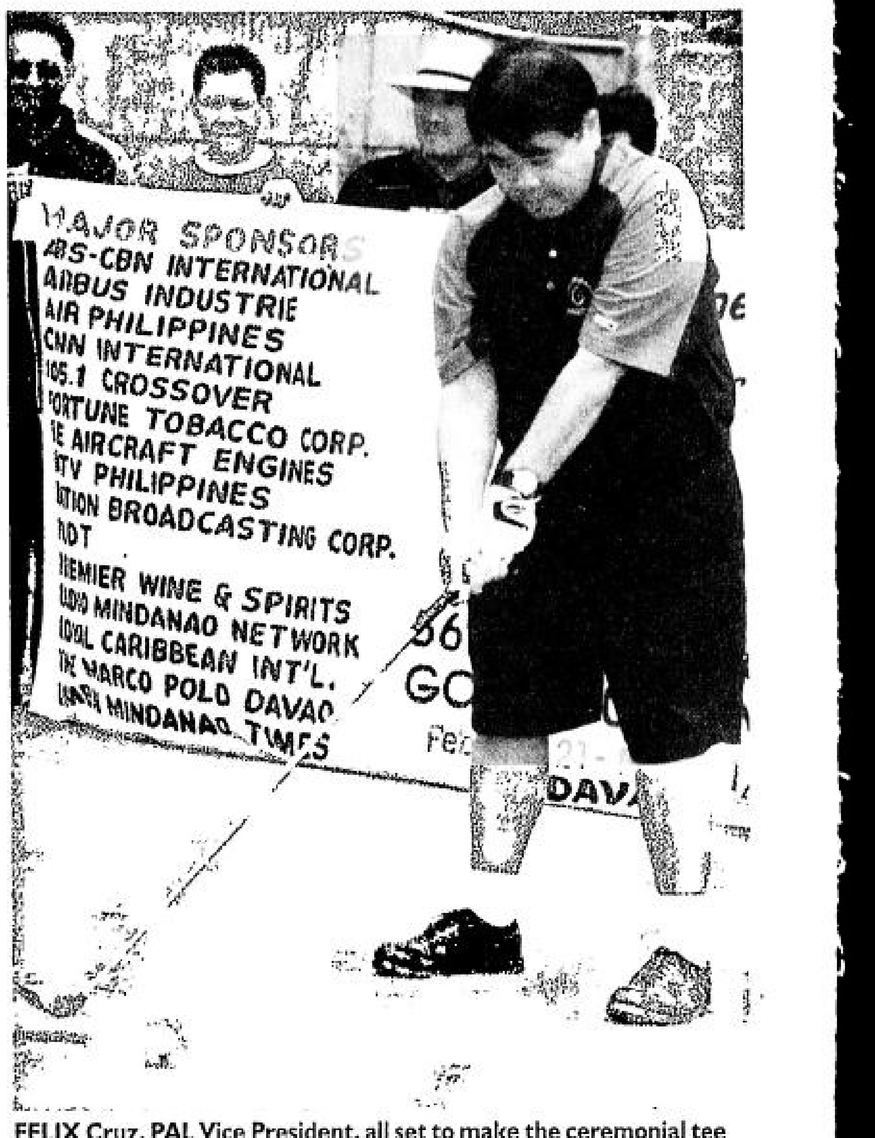
DAVAO CITY–No offense meant to the country's senior golfers but the real PAL Interclub begins today at both Apo and Palos Verdes, with a record 77 teams in attendance.

After a two-day break following the conclusion of the 17th PAL Interclub Seniors won by Luisita on Sunday, golfers 55-and-below take the spotlight for four days in the country's unofficial team golf championship.

And suddenly, the battle in the 56th PAL Interclub is not just among Canlubang, Luisita and Manila Southwoods anymore.

Include Del Monte of Bukidnon.

Said Canlubang mainstay Tommy Manotoc: "If we are the team to watch, Manila Southwoods, Luisita and Del Monte are the teams we are going to watch."



FELIX Cruz, PAL Vice President, all set to make the ceremonial tee off. ROGER MARGALLO

Del Monte is bannered by Paul Miñoza, who earned a national slot in the Putra Cup last year for winning the U-Bix Riviera National Pro-Am with his brother Raul at Riviera's Couples last November.

Miñoza, a younger brother of the eminent Frankie, will be backed up by Dr. Tristan Tabanas, Tommy Tabanas, Jett Plete, Joel Opaco, Ondon Mondilla, Boboy Jaraula, Lino Retuerto, Jeff Bernaldez and another Minoza - Ben.

"Canlubang will still be the team to beat," said Paul Miñoza.

Manotoc, who at 54 is playing his last Men's Regular PAL Interclub, will banner Canlubang's drive for a fourth straight victory in the fabled event that gives 3 points to a birdie, 2 to a par and 1 to a bogey.

But history is not on Canlubang's side. The first time it positioned itself for a four in a row record in 1997, it failed.

Manotoc's teammates are a mix of youth and experience. Dave Hernandez, Abe Rosal and Jose Mari Hechanova are the team's "elders" while the young blood include Jay Bayron, Boyet Zaragoza, Jun Bernis, Ronnie Torrecampo and J.R. Tanpinco.

Luisita has Iggy Clavecilla as the playing captain. His teammates are Jojo Guingona, Boy Blue Ocampo, Reggie Pena, Jinky Tuason, Richie Garcia, Jojo Fernando, Alex Montelibano and Francis Gaston.

One-time champion Southwoods will lean on Erwin Virluan, Jun Jun Plana, Juami Rocha, Lyndon Barril, Gene Bondoc and Artemio Murakami, among others.

The tournament was teed off yesterday during ceremonies graced by deputy ombudsman Margarito Gervacio, PSC Commissioner Binggoy Montemayor, PAL vice president Felix Cruz, Palos Verdes manager Joe Marfori, Apo's Lucio Orfelia and PAL's tournament chairman Doming Duerme.

There are 10 players to a team in the tournament that has four divisions–Championship, Founders, Friendship and Sportswriters.

Only five players will play for a team each day, with the best four scores counting in the tournament sponsored by 105.1 Crossover, ABS-CBN, Global, Air Philippines, CNN International, Fortune Tobacco, GE Aircraft Engines, Joey 92.3, MTV Philippines, PLDT, Premier Wines and Spirits, Radio Mindanao Network, Royal Caribbean, The Marco Polo Davao, UMBN-Mindanao Times and Pilipinas Shell.

Among the corporate backers are 96.3Wrock, Apo View Hotel and Boeing International. The minor supporters include Accel, Asia Brewery, Century Park Hotel, Tanduay, TaylorMade, Nestle Philippines and Discovery Channel.

Chairman's Cup set March 7-8

By Dennis U. Eroa

EVERYTHING is set for the holding of the 5th SBMA Chairman's Cup, a two-day golfing event for the benefit of poor but deserving students from Zambales, Olongapo City and Bataan.

A project of SBMA chair Felicito "Tong" Payumo, the golfest will be held at the Subic Bay Golf and Country Club. The March 7-8 tournament is dubbed "Golf for a Cause."

Freeport investors and businessmen from the country's various special economic zones will see action in the tournament.

"I am gladdened by the tremendous support being given to this worthy undertaking. This event is a boost to the education of some 80 students, including those from the Aeta community," Payumo said.

The scholars are presently studying in various colleges namely Columban College, Aura and UP-Diliman.

There will be team and individual competitions. Entries will be limited to 30 teams and registration will be on a first come, first served basis.

Supporting the event are ICTSI, Norkis-Yamaha, United Distillers, Inc., exclusive distributor of Johnnie Walker, Smart/PLDT, Asia International Auctioneers and United Auctionners.

Those interested may call Portia Zabala of the SBMA Tourism Department at 047-252-42-42/4123.

Meanwhile, the Media nine-ball championship fires off March 7 at the Gerry's Grill along Waterfront Rd. Spearheaded by the SBMA's Media Relations Group headed by Rey Garcia. The tournament is also supported by Payumo.

Media practitioners from Central Luzon will compete for trophies and cash prizes in this one-day event.

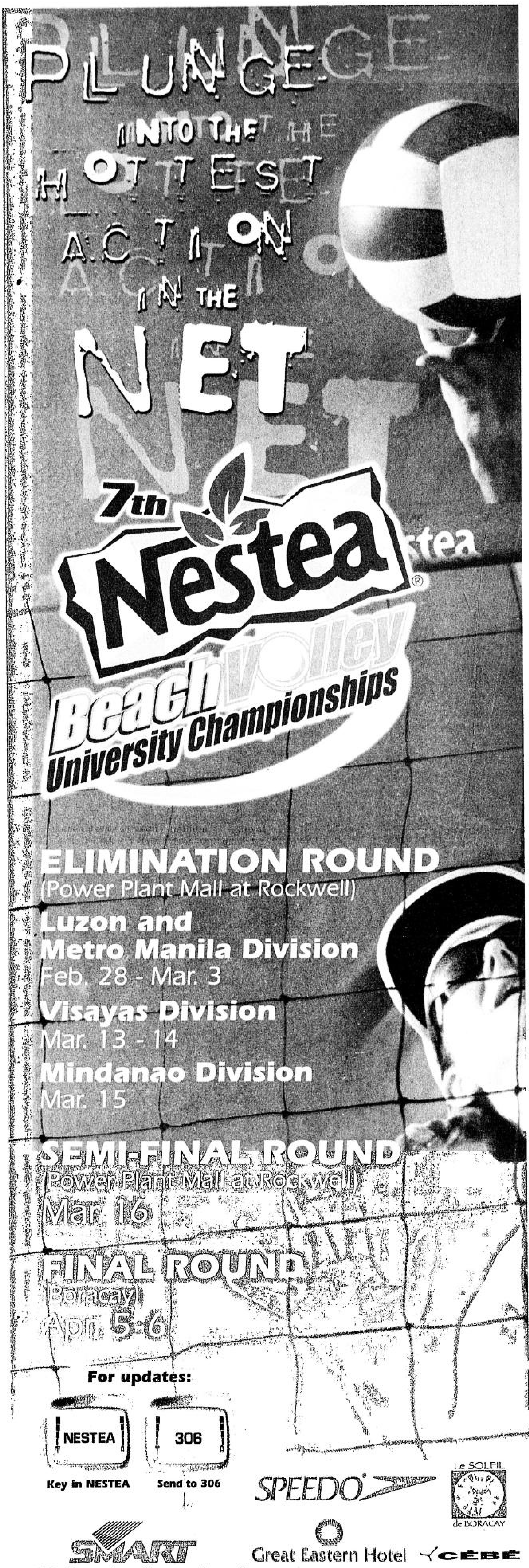
Tour Pilipinas mirrors PBA draft

EXPECT the Tour Pilipinas 2003, trumpeted as the revival of multi-stage cycling in the country, to come up with several innovations when it hits the road this summer.

And one of them is the holding of a draft wherein the 84 riders culled out of the stringent qualifyings two months ago will be picked in public by 12 corporate teams ala-PBA annual rookie draft.

"The drafting of the riders will provide balance and competition among the teams, a move conceptualized to make the races exciting," said Tour Pilipinas executive director Mar Mendoza yesterday at the PSA Forum at the Holiday Inn.

After the 17-day, 15-stage race set April 24-May 11 from Sorsogon down south to Laoag City up north and back to Metro Manila, six circuit races are scheduled in the off-season to ensure that the riders are in peak form all year long. *June Navarro*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Buddy quits SEAG post

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TENNIS chief Buddy Andrada yesterday said he will resign as member of the screening committee for the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games because of the criteria faux pas which rocked the Philippine sports scene anew.

He also challenged committee chief Steve Hontiveros to do the same and give the Philippine Olympic Committee a free hand to choose new members for a "fresh start."

"I don't want to be a part of that committee anymore because of the embarrassment it caused to the POC," said Andrada during the PSA Forum at the Holiday Inn.

He was referring to the "honesty policy" for national sports associations endorsing athletes to the SEAG. The statement drew criticism from the Philippine Sports Commission.

Hontiveros said he will try to persuade Andrada to change his mind and maintained that the issue stemmed from "miscommunication."

"If you are at fault then all you have to do is admit it," said Andrada of Hontiveros. "Let's stop all of these once and for all."

Judo president Reynaldo Jaylo, who is also a member of the screening committee, said: "With the way things are going, we are lucky if we land fifth place in Vietnam."

He said committing communication gaffe is "fast becoming a trend in the POC."

Jaylo was referring to the controversy that stemmed from the remarks of POC secretary general Romy Ribaño who said that the 2005 SEAG hosting is in jeopardy because President Arroyo will no longer run in 2004.

Andrada said the POC leadership must only have one voice and one stand regarding issues.

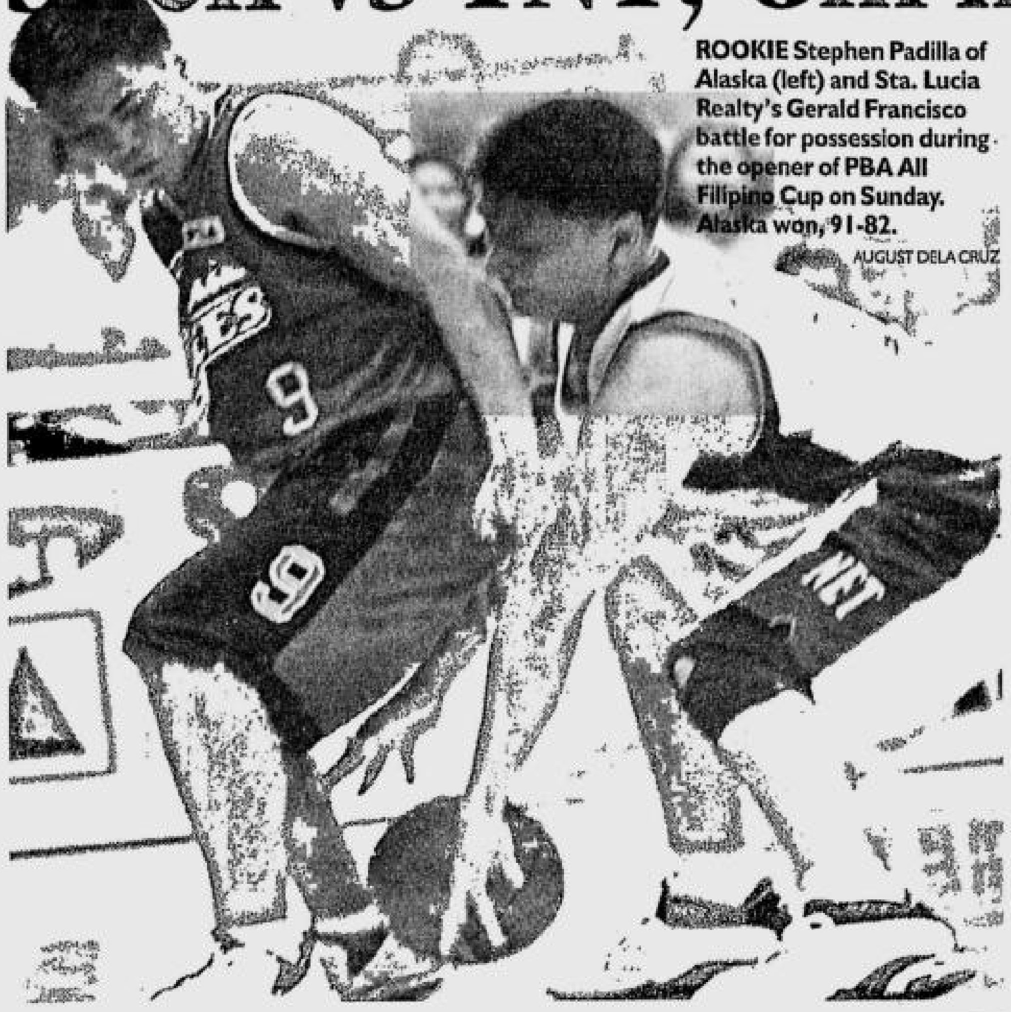
Hontiveros earlier said there is a detailed guidelines apart from the "honesty guidelines" approved upon by the committee during its meeting last week.

However, such detailed guidelines never came up when committee member Nestor Ilagan of rowing was interviewed by mediamen last Thursday.

Ilagan said the detailed guidelines–which require at least a silver medal in 2001 SEAG or a bronze in the 2002 Asian Games–was never mentioned in the meeting.

PBA RESUMES

Shell vs TNT; Gin meets P'foods



ROOKIE Stephen Padilla of Alaska (left) and Sta. Lucia Realty's Gerald Francisco battle for possession during the opener of PBA All Filipino Cup on Sunday. Alaska won, 91-82.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By June Navarro

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports)*
5 p.m.—Shell vs Talk N Text
7:30 p.m.—Ginebra vs Purefoods

FOUR battle-grizzled teams, all aching to test their resolve, make their debut when the PBA-Samsung All Filipino Cup resumes today at the Philsports Arena.

Crowd-drawer Barangay Ginebra, which fortified its roster with the addition of two promising rookies, takes the floor at 7:30 p.m. opposite Purefoods, a team hoping to fare well against the heavyweights by parading a new coach.

Talk N Text also indulged in a massive buildup during the off-season and is set to touch off its campaign against Shell Velocity in the curtain-raiser at 5 p.m.

Ginebra rookies Romel Adducul and Sunday Salvacion are well augured to add teeth to the Kings' lineup, which already has Eric Menk, Zandro Limpot, Bal David and Mark Caguioa on their offensive machinery.

These names mean a lot to Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio, who took over the coaching reins of the Hotdogs from Eric Altamirano two weeks before the season opened last Sunday.

Gregorio has Noy Castillo, Andy Seigle, Alvin Patrimonio, Boyet Fernandez, Kerby Raymundo, Rey Evangelista and Richard Yee in mind to counter the Kings' might.

Expectations also run high on Gilbert Demape and Rodney Santos, who were traded by their respective teams in the off-season, and rookie Billy Mamaril.

The Shell-Talk N Text collision offers a plethora of fresh faces expected to create names sooner than expected.

Rookies Eddie Laure, Adonis Sta. Maria and the high-leaping Ronald Tubid of Shell will showcase their talent against their Fil-American counterparts at the Phone Pals.

The Phone Pals acquired three rookie Fil-Ams (Harvey Carey, Jimmy Alapag and Kahi Villa), all of them capable of giving Asi Taulava, Victor Pablo and Mark Telan a lift in the face of adversity.

NBA results

Houston 101, Boston 95 (OT); Minnesota 117, Milwaukee 114; Memphis 103, Utah 92; Chicago 90, Phoenix 87; Golden State 94, Denver 89; Seattle 86, Detroit 79.

Reuters

Big Dome ads irk PBA bigwigs

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association is again contemplating pulling out the Araneta Coliseum after claiming that the Araneta management garnished the arena with advertisers without the consent and knowledge of the league's bigwigs.

The brandings of a Japanese car manufacturer, an automotive battery company and a juice drink, which directly competes with the products of San Miguel Corporation, were seen prominently on television, getting the ire of PBA officials in the process.

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala could not be reached for comment but a reliable source said the league is set to appeal its clamor to Uniprom Inc., the entertainment arm of the Araneta Group of Companies.

PBA and Araneta officials will meet tomorrow to settle the dispute.

June Navarro

Shineway clips Spring

SHINEWAY Ham Sausage of Ozamiz spilled Spring Cooking Oil, 101-88, Monday to share the lead with three others in the Luzon leg of the National Basketball League (NBL) first regional championship at the University of Assumption gym in San Fernando, Pampanga.

The victory, coupled with Forward Taguig's 94-87 beating of Wang's Ball Club and M. Lhuillier-Kwarta Padala's 78-75 conquest of erstwhile unbeaten UA-Pampanga created a four-way tie for first place among Taguig, Lhuillier, Shineway and Pampanga, each with a 2-1 record.

Spring sustained its second loss in three games while Wang's remained winless after three games in the tourney sponsored by adidas, Burlington, Oishi, Shineway Ham Sausage and Mei Mei Bihon.

Melfred Sampilo sparked Shineway's triumph over the sputtering Cooking Oil Masters with 20 points, while Robin Mendoza led Taguig's production with 31.

Scores:

SHINEWAY 101—Sampilo 20, Cabigkis 18, Jaca 17, Echavez 11, Misola 9, Libatog 7, Ferraren 7, Guerrero 5, Alvarado 4, Marucot 2, Isidron 1.

SPRING 88—Bautista 26, Buendia 12, Ybanez 10, Reyes 9, Manuel 9, Garcia 7, Saygo 4, Mallari 3, Limbo 3, Habelito 2, Espiritu 2.

Quarters: 14-16, 49-32, 71-54, 101-88.

St. Francis dribblers gain q'finals

By Roy Luarca

LEGASPI CITY—St. Francis of Assisi proved too strong for University of Mindanao yesterday, posting a 90-59 thrashing and barging into the quarterfinals of the 57th National Students Basketball Championships here.

It was the second straight win for the defending champion Doves in Group B of the collegiate division.

They routed the UPHR-Laguna Saints, 84-38, Monday night.

The Doves, five-time NCRAA titlists, erected a 55-24 halftime spread and finished off their opponents with an 18-6 salvo opening the third quarter.

That they did it without much effort and less cohesion underscored the Doves' capability to retain the crown they won at the expense of the University of Visayas last year in Roxas City.

"We are still in the stage of experimenting with our offensive patterns," said St. Francis coach Gabby Velasco.

With a powerhouse lineup that included Philippine team candidates Ranidel de Ocampo, Irvin Sotto and Al Vergara, the Doves thoroughly outplayed the Wildcats.

The speedy and wily Vergara topscored with 16 points, Roy Billanes added 14, Jeffrey Mella 12, De Ocampo and Sotto 11 each and Lyndon Abrian 10 for the Doves.

Eman Samigue, the tournament's tallest player at 6-foot-9 who is being sought after by Sen. John Osmeña to reinforce his John O team in the PBL, led the Wildcats with 18 points.

UM suffered its first defeat after beating Luzon University, 74-69, on Monday. UV whip Aquinas, 124-83, in the other collegiate game.

In inter-secondary play, San Beda College cruised to the quarterfinals with a 111-70 dumping of Southern City College at the Divine Word College of Legaspi High School gym.

Iloilo High School matched San Beda's 2-0 record with an equally easy 108-40 thrashing of DWCL.

Lyceum clobbered University of Mindanao, 111-69, in the opener of their best-of-three series for the girls' crown being offered in the tournament for the first time.

The event also known as the National Inter-Collegiate and Inter-Secondary Basketball Championships is being hosted by the province of Albay headed by Gov. Al Francis Bichara. It is being supported by Cebuana Lhuillier, Spring Cooking Oil, Healthy Options, Molten, YKL Color Films, Burlington, Baker's Fair and Absolute.

Angeles entry advances

VIGAN—Nikki Manalo of Angeles City blanked Martina Rivero 6-0, 6-0 to barge into the semifinal of the girls' 14-under division Sunday in the 2003 Milo Junior Tennis Cup & Regional Workshop here at the Vigan hardcourts.

Manalo was joined by Red Tan, who whipped Ivy Calamaah 6-0, 6-2 while JV Custodio of Batac downed Angelo Rivero 6-2, 6-3 in the unisex 10-under group in the Milo netfest organized by CTW and supported by Wilson balls, adidas and Sports Kids and sanctioned by Philta RVP Ferdie Medina as a Group-2 event.

Asian F3 tilt races slated

ONE of the biggest things that hit the Asian motor sports scene last year was the Asian Formula 3 series.

Organized by the Asian Formula 3 Corporation with Colby Ventures Inc. as Philippine events promoter, the AF3 is scheduled to hold 14 rounds of racing in six countries. Aside from Malaysia and the Philippines, four new venues will be visited this year–Japan, Korea, Thailand and China.

With support from Shell, Denso, Castrol, Petron and Yokohama, Filipino teams and drivers are expected to give their counterparts another stiff challenge this season, according to Colby Ventures Inc. president Tom Pastor.

AF3 will be featured in the six events of the Asian Festival of Speed (AFOS). There will be a stand-alone event to be held at the Subic International Raceway (event date to be announced), making a total of 14 races in seven event dates.

For more information about the AF3 Series, log on to www.ASIANF3.net.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Knicks vs Rockets (Game 6, 1993 Finals), 9 a.m. (r - 11 p.m.), Pistons vs Kings, 11 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), Solar Sports

TENNIS: Kroger St. Jude, 4:30 p.m. (r), Star Sports

POOL: Rack 'Em Up 2, 1 p.m. (r - 8 p.m.), Star Sports

GOLF: Carlsberg Malaysian Open, 10 a.m. (r) and 9 p.m., Star Sports

Nissan Open, 2 p.m. (r), Star Sports

BOWLING: USA vs Europe Tenpin Bowling 200, 8 a.m. (r), ESPN

SOCCER: EPL, 7 a.m., Star Sports, 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. (r), ESPN

UEFA Champions League, 4 p.m., ESPN, tomorrow at 3:30 a.m., Star Sports

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

'Sayonara' races

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

ON Sunday, March 2, the historic Manila Jockey Club, founded in 1867 as the first racing club in Southeast Asia, stages its much-awaited farewell races at its San Lazaro Hippodrome on Tayuman Street featuring some of the country's most outstanding horses in interesting no-bearing races.

"We are preparing exciting races for the *bayang karerista* this Sunday before we move to our new home in Carmona, Cavite," said MJC president lawyer Alfonso "Boy" Reyno, stressing, "We are also taking this opportunity to thank the legions of racing fans for their continuing support without whose patronage MJC would not have gone this far." Sunday's "sayonara" races will be held to celebrate the anniversary of the Philippine Racing Commission, highlighted by the staging of the Senate Spouses stakes races.

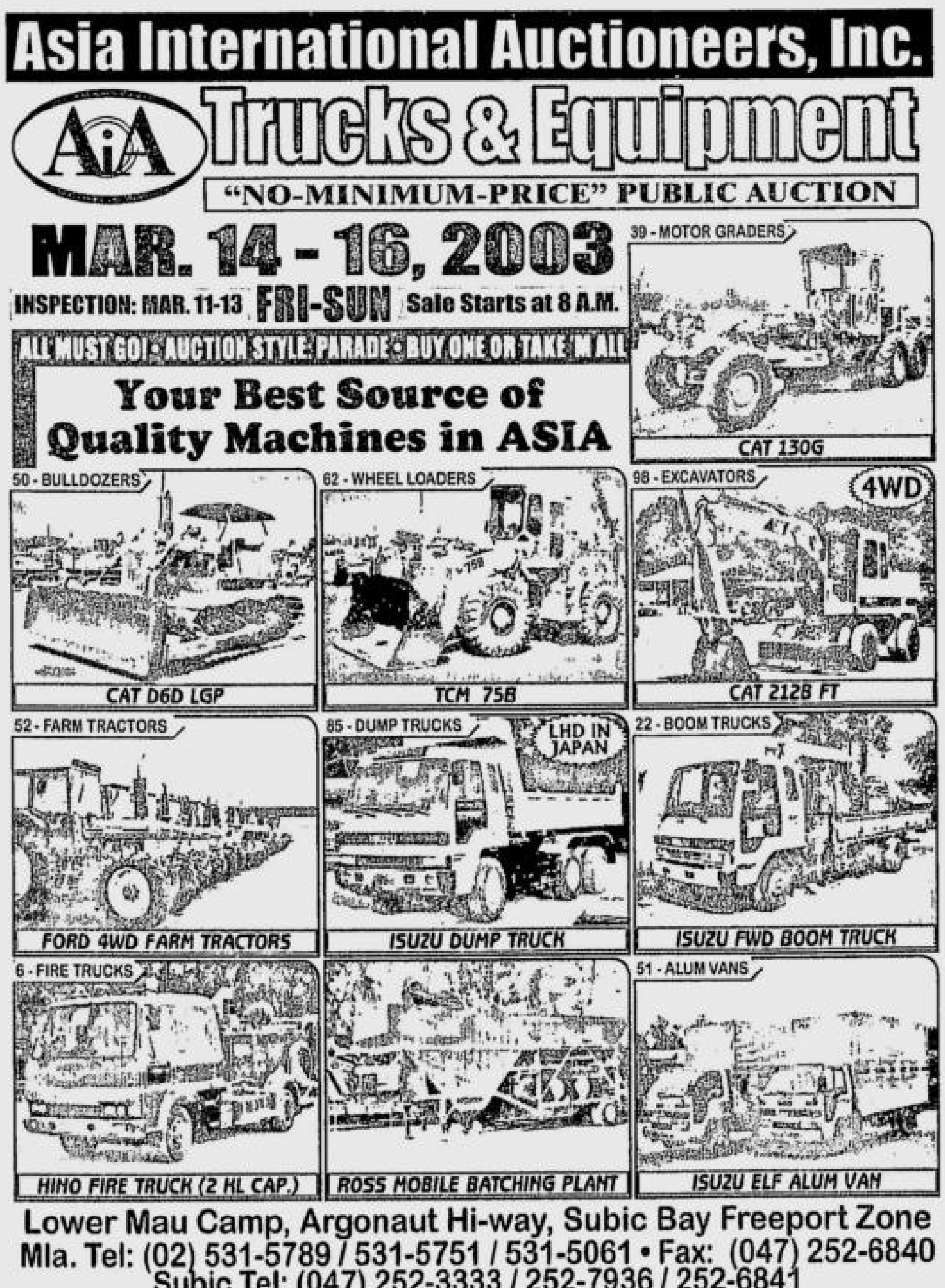
MJC executive vice president and chief operating officer lawyer Roberto Reverente added, "We are honored to host these races which would benefit not only the horseracing industry but the government as well from taxes derived from the expected record sales right here (on Tayuman) and, later on, in our new home."

The new home is the 77-hectare San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, where inaugural races are set for Wednesday, April 2. A soft opening at the world-class sports and entertainment complex will be held on Wednesday, March 19. There are 960 well-kept stables in the complex where rentals are much cheaper, from only P1,300 a month per horse compared to P2,500 and up in Metro Manila. Among those who have availed of SLLP stables are racing luminaries Hermie Esguerra, Sandy Javier and Putch Puyat, the so-called Big 3 of the much respected Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners.

"The San Lazaro Leisure Park will also provide a housing and hotel complex and a casino to complete the leisure facilities which we can offer to both local and foreigh patrons," said Reyno, who once admitted that none of his business associates knew anything about horseracing before. "I've never been to any racing club in my whole life. Neither any of my partners."

***

ALL THE BEST. Kudos to sportsmen-businessmen Edgardo Reyes and Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, chair and president, respectively, of Puyat Steel Corporation, the country's most outstanding manufacture of galvanized sheets and coils, for their ISO 9001: 2000 Certification, an international seal of product quality.



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MIÑOZA 8 SHOTS DOWN

Casas, 2 others share Razon golf lead

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sun CELLULAR

By Jong Arcano

MIÑOZA

THE DRIVE to win the million-peso bonanza got the elite field all charged up but at the end of the first round play of the cash-rich Don Pocholo Razon Memorial Invitational yesterday, the one-under-par 71s of Mars Pucay, Benjie Magada and Cassius Casas were good enough to put all of them on top.

Not that they lost their way at The Country Club where only the ultra rich members can play. The blustery winds were largely to blame.

It got too windy reading the greens became as tough as choosing the right club and Casas was relieved to have broken par despite the conditions.

"It was very tough to putt because the winds were causing the ball to move," said Casas, who is out to break a streak of failed title bids where he had finished second in his last four tournaments and five times in the last six.

Casas started hot with four birdies for a front nine 33 but limped home with a 38. Magada needed to make two birdies on his last four to catch up while Pucay finished with nines of 37-34.

Though Gerald Rosales, fresh from a ninth place finish in the Malaysian Masters worth more than P1.1 million, managed to stay within striking distance with one of the six 72s, the eminent Frankie Miñoza fell far behind.

After opening with a birdie, Miñoza went through one bad hole after another, including two double-bogeys on the fourth and seventh. He wound up with a 79 and was tied for 32nd place in the 40-man standings.

"I played well but struggled on the greens," said the 42-year-old Miñoza.

Joining Rosales at 72 in the P3.5 million tourney in honor of the late Don Pocholo Razon which is the first pro event to be held at The Country Club were rookie pros Cookie LaO and Angelo Que, Rodolfo Cuello, Danny delos Santos and Antonio Lascuña.

Razon is the founder of the International Container Terminal Services, Inc. which is the country's top ports management company.

Scores:

71 - B. Magada, M. Pucay, C. Casas

72 - C. LaO, R. Cuello, G. Rosales, D. delos Santos, A. Que, A. Lascuña

73 - Rob. Pactolerin, E. Ababa

74 - E. Salvador, M. Manubay, Ron. Pactolerin, R. Sinfuego

75 - R. Sasutil

76 - R. Pagunsan, E. Sanchez, C. Ababa, R. Bisera, V. Santia, E. Bagtas

77 - D. Zarate, R. Cuello, R. Alit, M. Siodina

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Race 5--1. Tatler Cover 2. Haz It All 3. Dixie Dancer

Race 6--1. Royal Bet 2. May's Magic 3. Santa Fe 4. Hurry King 5. Thunder Dragon

Race 7--1. Shining Pyramid 2. Men of Honor 3. Alluring 4. Summit Power 5. Green Buck 6. With Feeling

Race 8--1. Double Header 2. Dedicated 3. Star of Arabia 4. Aringkingking 5. Best Lover

Race 9--1. Don Benito 2. Jamie's Princess 3. Carlo's Charm 4. Winning Prize 5. Go Johnny Go 6. That's My Tiger

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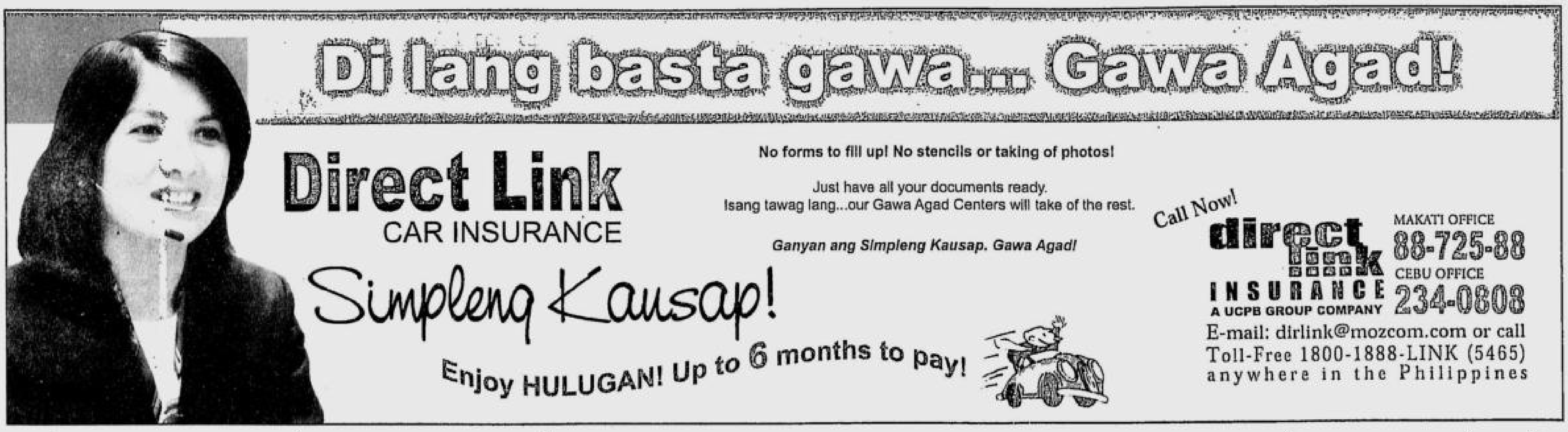
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■ BARE EYE: Thou shalt not use the name of BMW in vain A24

Robbers ride high again

Chinese consulate loses P2 million in daring heist

By Philip Tubeza

THE CHINESE consulate in Malate, Manila lost P2 million after three unidentified men shot and robbed Allied Bank employees who were taking the money to the bank, police said yesterday.

Bank security guard Richard Jacuba of the Armored Security Agency was injured after one of the robbers shot him in the back before grabbing the bag of money on Monday.

Senior Supt. Gorgonio Rosero, Ermita police station chief, said his men recovered two empty slugs and four shells of a 9 mm pistol from the crime scene.

Two other bank employees were unhurt.

The robbers were allegedly armed with 9 mm and cal. .45 pistols.

The robbers struck at around 3:15 p.m. on Monday at the Royal Plaza Hotel on 648 Remedios Street in Malate.

Jacuba and two other bank employees, who had just taken the P2 million from the consulate on the 10th floor of the hotel, were headed for the Allied Bank branch to deposit the cash.

The bank branch was just "100 steps away" from the hotel, investigators said.

When the three reached the hotel gate, one of the suspects approached and held at gunpoint hotel security

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6. When I Talk To You - Mandy Moore	whenitok2u
7. Bring Me To Life - Evanescence	brngme2life
8. Come Around - Rhett Miller	comearound
9. Nights In White Satin - Mario Frangoulis	whitesatin
10. Innervision - System Of A Down	innervision
11. Adidas - Killer Mike	adidas
12. French Kissing - Sarah Connor	french
13. Say It - Mojofly	sayit
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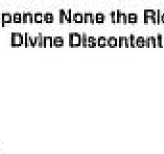
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Wycoco: We're not persecuting Acsa

By Philip Tubeza

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco has denied that the NBI is persecuting Landbank cashier Acsa Ramirez and that the bureau is "getting too personal" in its investigation of her alleged involvement in the tax scam.

Wycoco said that the motion for reconsideration the NBI had filed before the Ombudsman on Monday was just "part of the legal process."

He said that bureau did not file a motion for reconsideration against Art San Juan because there is already a money laundering case against him being heard by the Binangonan court.

"There is no need. We are going to be redundant if we do that," Wycoco said.

Ramirez's lawyer Virginia Pinlac, Ramirez's lawyer hit the NBI for not appealing the Ombudsman's dismissal of the anti-money laundering charge against San Juan concerning the Jose M. Francisco account, one of the four fictitious accounts in Landbank Binangonan that were used to divert P431 million worth of taxes.

"I wonder why they moved for a reconsideration of Acsa's case and not on the dismissal of (one of the) charges against Art San Juan," Pinlac said.

"They are pinning down Acsa because they bungled the case against her," she said in Taglish.

It's funny and irritating why they are forcing their case. It seems they do not even want to give her (Ramirez) time to rest," Pinlac added.

But Wycoco said that NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division Chief Elfren Meneses had filed the motion for reconsideration because during the Ombudsman's review of the case, Meneses was not called to present his case.

"He was not heard so we are presenting our side," Wycoco said.

He said they also filed a motion for reconsideration because Ramirez "had more questionable transactions" than her predecessor Ramon Joven.

While the Ombudsman dismissed the charges against Acsa and one charge against San Juan, it approved the filing of a case against Joven.

"We are not going after Acsa, Ramon Joven, or Art San Juan, but we are after the P431 million pesos worth of taxes lost in the scam," Wycoco said. "We are just doing our job."

He added that the NBI only has five days to file the motion before the Ombudsman so they did it immediately.

But Pinlac said that the NBI did not present any new evidence in its motion for reconsideration.

"These are simply rehashed (charges)," she said. "These have already been offered (before the Ombudsman), and the Ombudsman has dissected and dismissed them."

She added that she is confident the Ombudsman would stand by its decision dismissing the charges against Ramirez.

NBP chief to patch things up with heads of rival jail gangs

By Christian Esguerra

BUREAU of Corrections Director Ricardo Macala has assumed the role of peace negotiator to avert a riot between supporters of prominent inmates Romeo Jalosjos and Rey Yap at the New Bilibid Prisons.

Macala on Monday invited leaders of opposing camps to dialogue and "iron out their differences."

"Both of them gave a positive response to my invitation," he said yesterday. "I hope we could have the dialogue anytime this week."

Jalosjos and Yap, both serving life terms, have apparently polarized the prison population. Their rivalry can be traced to Mindanao where the Yap and Jalosjos families dominate local politics.

Yap was a town mayor in Misamis Occidental, and Jalosjos was a congressman of Zamboanga del Norte.

Yap was found guilty of masterminding the murder of a political rival in 1992. Jalosjos was convicted of raping a minor.

Macala acknowledged that the conflict between the two camps could not be resolved through a single dialogue. But he said that a meeting between the two factions could ease the tension.

Jalosjos is "senior adviser" of the Batang City Jail gang, and Yap of the Sigue-Sigue/Sputnik faction.

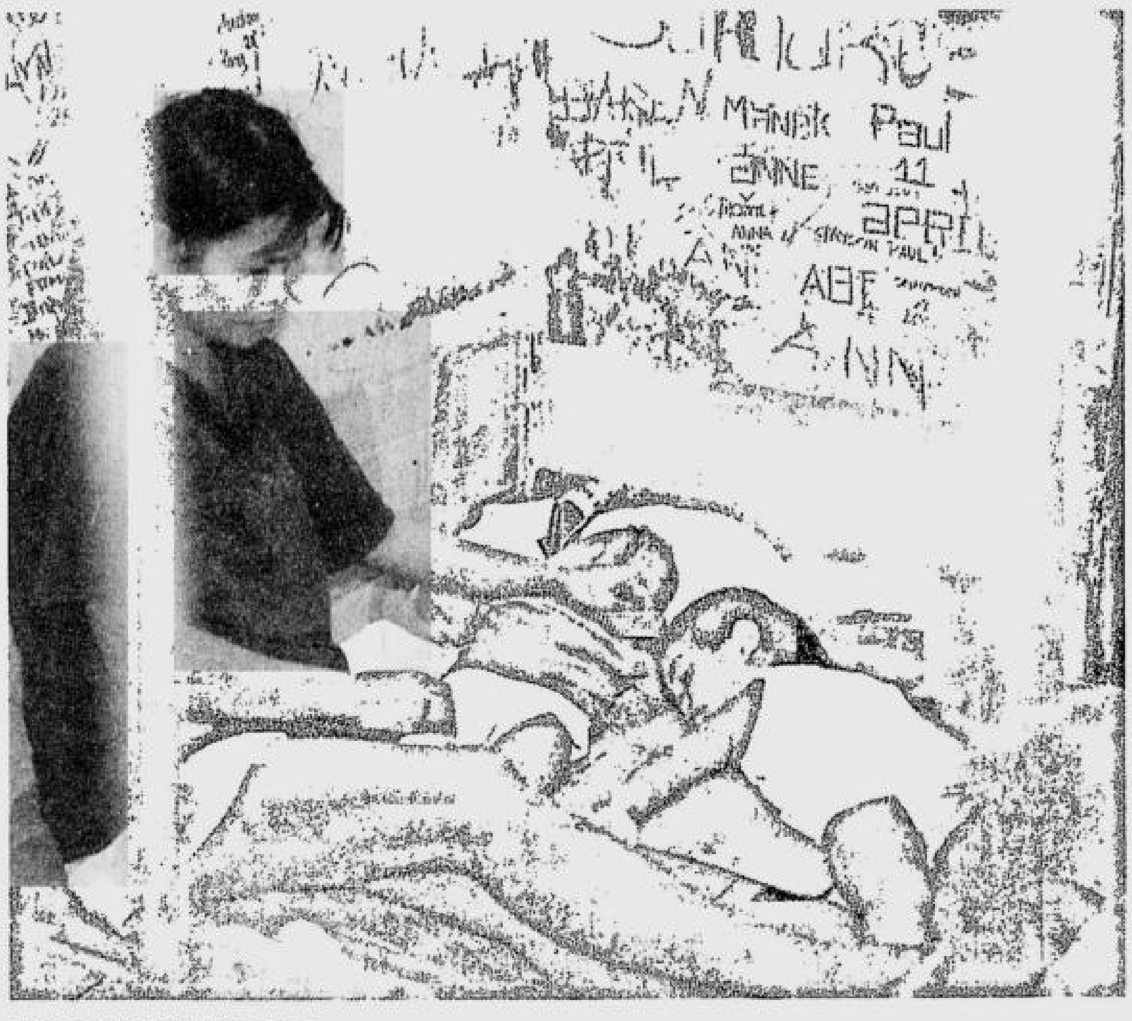
Macala said Yap and Jalosjos earned their following in jail because of their power, influence and money.

"Inmates love them because they give them money especially in times of need," he said.

Early this month, Yap was locked up in the isolation cell after he was supposedly found with about P300,000 in fake money in his maximum security compound cell.

His supporters accused Jalosjos of funding Yap's transfer to the isolation cell where he would then be killed.

A prison insider said Yap's followers have asked politicians to exert pressure on NBP officials to move Yap back to the general prison population. He was returned to his original cell last week.



NURSERY WITH BARS

A woman detainee at the Baler Police Station in Quezon City has no other choice but to nurse her babies, aged 1 and 2, behind bars. Arlyn de Leon, caught in a drug buy-bust in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City, has no one to leave her children with, while she is serving time.

NOEL DAYANG

Teenagers on SUV maul, rob boy, 14

By Leila Salaverria

THREE high school students, one of whom is said to be a grandson of a former senator, have been accused of mauling a 14-year-old student and stealing his cellular phone in Makati City on Monday.

The incident happened outside the victim's school, the Colegio de San Agustin, on Lumbang Street in Dasmariñas Village at around 3:20 p.m. on Monday, according to PO2 Ricky Mel Corpuz.

The three suspects, all aged 16, allegedly waited for the victim outside the school after the girlfriend of one of the suspects complained that the victim borrowed her cellular phone and did not return it.

Investigation showed that when the three teenagers spotted the vicitim, one of the suspects asked for his name and told him to come outside. When the victim had approached the suspect, the latter beat him up and grabbed his Nokia 6100 cellular phone. The suspect then boarded an Isuzu Trooper where his two friends waited, and they fled toward the Glorietta mall.

The victim and his older brother went to the Dasmariñas Association headquarters, then to the police station, to ask for help. On the way to the station, accompanied by barangay officials, they chanced upon the suspects' vehicle near Glorietta.

The victim's escorts then cornered the young men's vehicle and took them to police headquarters.

Upon questioning, one of the suspects said that his girlfriend was mad at her 14-year-old schoolmate for using and allegedly not returning her phone, police said.

According to Corpuz, the suspects' parents talked to the victim's parents to settle the matter amicably. He said the victim would not pursue charges against the suspects.

METROBRIEFS

Killed in Tondo

MELVIN C. Mendoza, 17, tried to patch things up with his estranged neighbor in Tondo, Manila yesterday. But instead of getting reconciled, his 17-year-old neighbor, a 16-year-old boy and another youth identified only as Ron-Ron, ganged up on Mendoza and stabbed him dead at around 1 a.m. yesterday. Mendoza, of Parola Compound, Tondo, was at the compound gate when he saw the suspect and decided to talk to him, said Detective Edgardo Ko of the Western Police District. "Mendoza and the suspect had been at odds for months," Ko said. At first, the two had a friendly talk and even walked up to the basketball court. But when they got there, the suspect's real intention became known, Ko said. The three boys stabbed Mendoza twice, Ko said. The victim died at the Gat Andres Bonifacio Hosptial in Tondo.

Philip Tubeza

Shot dead in QC

DRIVER Noe Hagad was shot dead when he tried to break up a fight between his best friend and the latter's wife in Quezon City on Sunday night. Hagad, 38, of Barangay Silangan, Quezon City, was shot dead at around 8 p.m. inside the house he shared with the suspect, identified as Edgar Alpaso. Another man, Eduardo Gabiano, 45, was also shot and injured. Police said that at the time of the shooting, Alpaso was drunk and was beating his wife. Hagad, who was with Gabiano, tried to intercede. But the drunken suspect pulled out a handgun, shot the two men and fled. Hagad was declared dead on arrival the East Avenue Medical Center.

Alcuin Papa

Slain in Sta. Cruz

A YOUNG woman was stabbed in front of the MetroBank branch on the corner of L. Rivera and Blumentritt streets in Sta. Cruz, Manila after midnight on Sunday. Witnesses told police that they saw the woman arguing with a man on P. Guevarra Street. From there up to the bank branch, the two continued to fight, said Detective Diomedes Labarda of the Western Police District. Witnesses said the suspect lost his temper pulled out a knife and stabbed the victim twice in the chest, before fleeing on foot. Labarda said some of the witnesses took the victim to the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center, but she was declared dead on arrival. The victim was described to be about 18 years old, 5-foot-2, and slim. she was wearing a white T-shirt and maong pants, Labarda said. The man was described to be about 5-foot-3 in height, fair, and of regular build.

Philip Tubeza

Telecom exec threatens to kill woman in Bel-Air cafe

By Leila Salaverria

THE OWNER of Liberty Telecoms was accused of threatening a 59-year-old woman and of creating a scandal inside a coffee shop in Makati on Monday.

Rosabella V. Ferro, a retired bank employee and a resident of Ayala Alabang Village, went to the police headquarters on Monday and reported that Raymond Moreno, owner of Liberty Telecoms had threatened to kill her.

Moreno, through his lawyer, Mary Charlene V. Hernandez, denied the accusation.

Hernandez said her client had no reason to threaten to kill Ferro, adding that Moreno only shouted at Ferro after she provoked him.

Ferro told police she was having coffee with her friend Maribel Pelayo at 5:30 p.m. on Monday at Cafe Caruso on Nicanor Garcia Street in Barangay Bel-Air when Moreno arrived, pointed his finger at them, cursed them and threatened to kill Ferro.

She said Moreno also told Pelayo that he would wait for her husband at the airport.

Police said Ferro and Pelayo knew Moreno because his wife was their former friend.

Moreno's lawyer Hernandez said her client wanted to talk to Pelayo's husband so he told her he would wait for him at the airport. She added that it was the women who first cursed at Moreno who was forced to answer back.

Maid tagged in couple's murder

By Christian Esguerra

POLICE on Monday tagged a housemaid in the gruesome killing of an elderly couple in Parañaque City on Sunday.

A last-minute blunder gave away suspect Salvacio Malubay, 42, who is under police custody for the killing of businessman Primo Espiritu, 63, and his wife Catalina, 55, police said.

The husband suffered a bash in the face and was strangled, while his wife was suffocated with a pillow, according to city police chief Rolando Estilles.

Malubay, who had worked for the couple for only two days, was suspiciously trembling when police forced their way into the Espiritu house in Barangay San Isidro at around 12:45 p.m., Estilles said.

It turned out that she had inadvertently locked herself in the house after she allegedly robbed and killed the couple, Estilles said.

"The house was locked from the inside, and she could not find the key," Estilles told the INQUIRER. "The only exit was located on the second floor. Apparently, she didn't want to risk jumping from there."

Suspicion on Malubay's possible involvement in the crime grew when the victim's relatives noticed that the maid was wearing a gold ring while she was being questioned by police.

Investigators were told that the gold ring belonged to Mrs. Espiritu. The suspect allegedly could not explain, how she got the piece of jewelry.

Estilles said the couple lost at least three mobile phones and an undetermined amount of cash and jewelry.

Operation Smile in medical mission

FOR the first time in its 20-year partnership with US-based Operation Smile International, Operation Smile Philippines is leading this year's annual multi-site medical mission scheduled which started on Feb. 21 until Feb. 28 to treat indigent children with cleft lips and cleft palates.

This year's mission is composed of Filipino medical professionals, instead of the usual combination of Filipino and international volunteers. The change was made when it became apparent that many volunteers in the US were reluctant to travel far from their homes due to the impending war in Iraq.

Congresswoman Edith Yotoko-Villanueva, president of Operation Smile Philippines Foundation, announced the decision.

"For the past 20 years, Operation Smile Philippines and Operation Smile International have worked side by side to build a strong partnership that has taken care of more than 12,000 Filipino children, Yotoko-Villanueva said. "Because of the present situation in the United States, Operation Smile Philippines is ready and willing to take the leadership role."

"We are committed to provide care for the children waiting for us in Naga, Davao and Cebu," she added.

Robbers ride high again

From page A23

guard Arnold Cegales.

Another suspect approached Jacuba, who sensed that they were going to be robbed.

Jacuba ran back to the hotel but the robber ran after him, police said.

The gunman caught up with Jacuba in the lobby and shot him in the back. The suspect then took the money bag Jacuba was carrying and ran out of the hotel, police said.

"There were many security guards there but we don't know why they did not do anything," one investigator said.

The robbers fled onboard a green Kawasaki motorcycle, which was parked across the hotel.

"We are trying to determine how they (the suspects) were able to find out that money was going to be taken to the bank," Rosero said.

One investigator added that the robbers might have also noticed bank employees regularly taking money from the consulate to the bank.

The police are trying to find out if the robbery was an inside job.

The police have sketches of the suspects.

The daring robbery was among a series committed after President Macapagal-Arroyo scolded police authorities on Thursday for failure to curb rampant criminality in the streets.

Thou shalt not use the name of BMW in vain

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

NEWS reporting can also be fun. Yes, as long as the young scribe doesn't step on sensitive toes, ouuch! And he takes extra care not to hurt the sensibilities of a sacred car company like, say, Rolls Royce or BMW.

Yes, BMW. Its local sellers predictably raised a howl when one of its late models made the headlines after it starred in a gory police story last week.

The great car, classy and truly expensive as it was, lost its magnificent bumper after it raked through a group of students waiting to attend a concert at the UP Diliman last week.

***

Five students were seriously injured. One of them, Precious Baldo, subsequently died of head injuries.

So how did the headlines the morning after the crash read?

"Wild BMW rakes through UP dorm," reads the Inquirer Metro section banner head.

The Star's inside section banner also flashed something about a "wayward BMW" figuring in the UP crash.

***

Like firemen out to douse a big daytime fire, local marketers of the great car brand protested the way the name BMW was allegedly slurred.

It was, the marketing men maintained, not the case of a faulty BMW car causing the accident.

Exactly. They could not be more than right.

However, it should also be explained that one of the risks of selling a great car is that it could be sold to defective drivers, which we have loads of hereabouts.

No kidding. The culprit in that BMW crash, Richard Ong, 24, was drunk at the time of the accident. He also had no valid license.

For the record, the driver had been charged with reckless imprudence resulting in homicide and multiple physical injuries.

Naturally, the BMW car, wrecked and impounded, could not be charged, he, he.

In the first place, it was in perfect condition before it raked through students waiting on the sidewalk in front of the UP Kamia Hall.

***

Well, it's like this. As it was the most prominent object in the accident, BMW ended up figuring in the headlines.

That, we dare say, is one of the risks of the trade.

Sorry, this typist still pinch-hitting as Metro section ed could not think of a more graphic headline. (Maybe I should take a crash course on headline writing from the BMW sales people?)

We could not also determine what liquor brand the drunken driver had imbibed that led him to lose his head en route to the crash.

Otherwise, we should have put the blame on the wine brand?

Not really. We can't and I won't. In the same way it should be made clear that we are not putting the blame on the sacred car brand for that accident.

You see, just like in any crime story, it's the role of the reporter to state the exact name of the weapons utilized.

The odd thing is that it seemed some people would like us to apologize for having committed a mortal sin by smearing a sacred name.

Thanks, I maybe at fault in the eye of sleek marketers, but no apologies are forthcoming.

They could fire me.

I would've still written that same headline even if, in the wildest of wayward possibilities, I happen to drive a BMW or a Jaguar instead of a rundown Honda.

We do love stating facts, even if it hurts.

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THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 DAREDEVIL 11:50, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30
4 THE EYE
5 NGAYONG NANDITO KA
6 DAREDEVIL
7 EXTREMIST

GB1 GREENBELT 1
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THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 DAREDEVIL 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20
3 MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10, 11:20
4 TWO WEEKS NOTICE 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
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3 NYMPHA
4 NGAYONG NANDITO KA
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6 EXTREMISTS
7 DAREDEVIL
8 TREASURE PLANET

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8 EXTREMISTS
9 LEGEND OF THE CROCODILE
10 NYMPHA

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4 HERO
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7 CLOSED
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6 NGAYONG NANDITO KA

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2 DAREDEVIL
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3 NYMPHA
4 EXTREMISTS

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5 NGAYONG NANDITO KA
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10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:50 END

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8 THEY

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4 EXTREMIST

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2 TWO WEEKS NOTICE
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4 TREASURE PLANET
5 FOUR FEATHERS
6 RING (JAPANESE)

Iloilo

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6 DAREDEVIL

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The good news about TV Patrol reporters

MEET the future of broadcasting news in the country.

Robert Tan and Jay Ruiz are just two of the more promising and enterprising broadcast journalists covering the police beat for ABS-CBN 2's early evening newscast "TV Patrol" (Monday to Friday, 6-7 p.m.).

Between them, they have covered all sorts of madness on the city streets.

Robert reported on the Laoag Air tragedy, the ambush killing of cop John Campos, the Nida Blanca murder case, the Strawberry shooting, and the Maria Theresa Carlson suicide.

Jay covered the Manor Hotel fire, the death of boy hostage Dexter Balalang and of his captor in Pasay City, the repatriation of Filipinos from Sabah, and Edsa 2.

History

When Edsa 3 erupted, both reporters were able to witness history unfolding before their very eyes. In fact, Robert and Jay virtually stared at death in the face during this event, but the two reporters were able to survive the nightmare.

Robert was on Ortigas when the Edsa 3 mob decided to march to Malacañang in the small hours. He recalls that police unleashed tear gas on the crowd but the wind blew the gas in the direction of the police and Robert.

"That was my first time and I didn't know what to do. It was a pretty bad feeling. Like your face was burning, your eyes were on fire, you couldn't breathe."

Jay tells his own Edsa 3 experience.

"I was in the van with Robert when the pro-Erap crowd mobbed us and shook our vehicle. I thought that was the end."

Dodging bullets

"Many times a reporter's life is on the line," says Jay. "It's part of our job. Like, when we cover raids on drug dens and the lairs of holdup men, sometimes we have to dodge bullets."

But he makes it clear that he's not painting reporters as fearless, emotionless heroes. "We're only human," he says. "We also feel for the victims in the stories we cover."

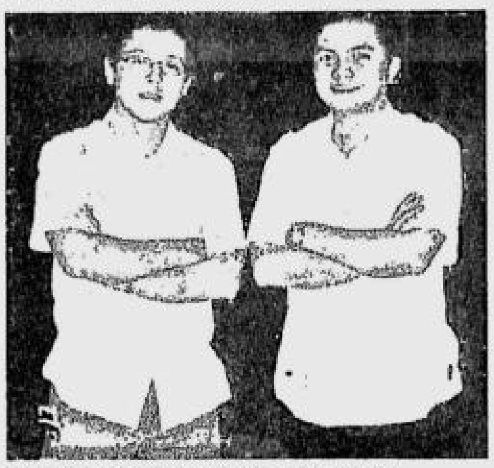
But both young men consider broadcast journalism their calling.

"When I was younger, my biggest pride and joy was when my news stories came out on the air," says Robert, 29. "But now, my fulfillment comes from a job well done. I am proud of my job because I am able to help people. In the end, it's all about public service."

"In our job," says Jay, 28, "the fulfillment is that we are able to act as the eyes and ears of society. Aside from informing and educating people, the media should also act as society's watchdog to protect the people from abuse."

Robert says he maintains his idealism by focusing on the positive. "When I find I'm getting jaded, I remind myself of my goal. I try to find the reason why I'm in this job in the first place. That keeps me going."

"The work is very flexible," says Jay. "Our schedules are very unpredictable. My shift is from 4 p.m. to midnight. But I stay up to 4 a.m. to write and edit. If a big story breaks at dawn, I could stay beyond 4 a.m."



NEWSMEN. Robert Tan and Jay Ruiz.

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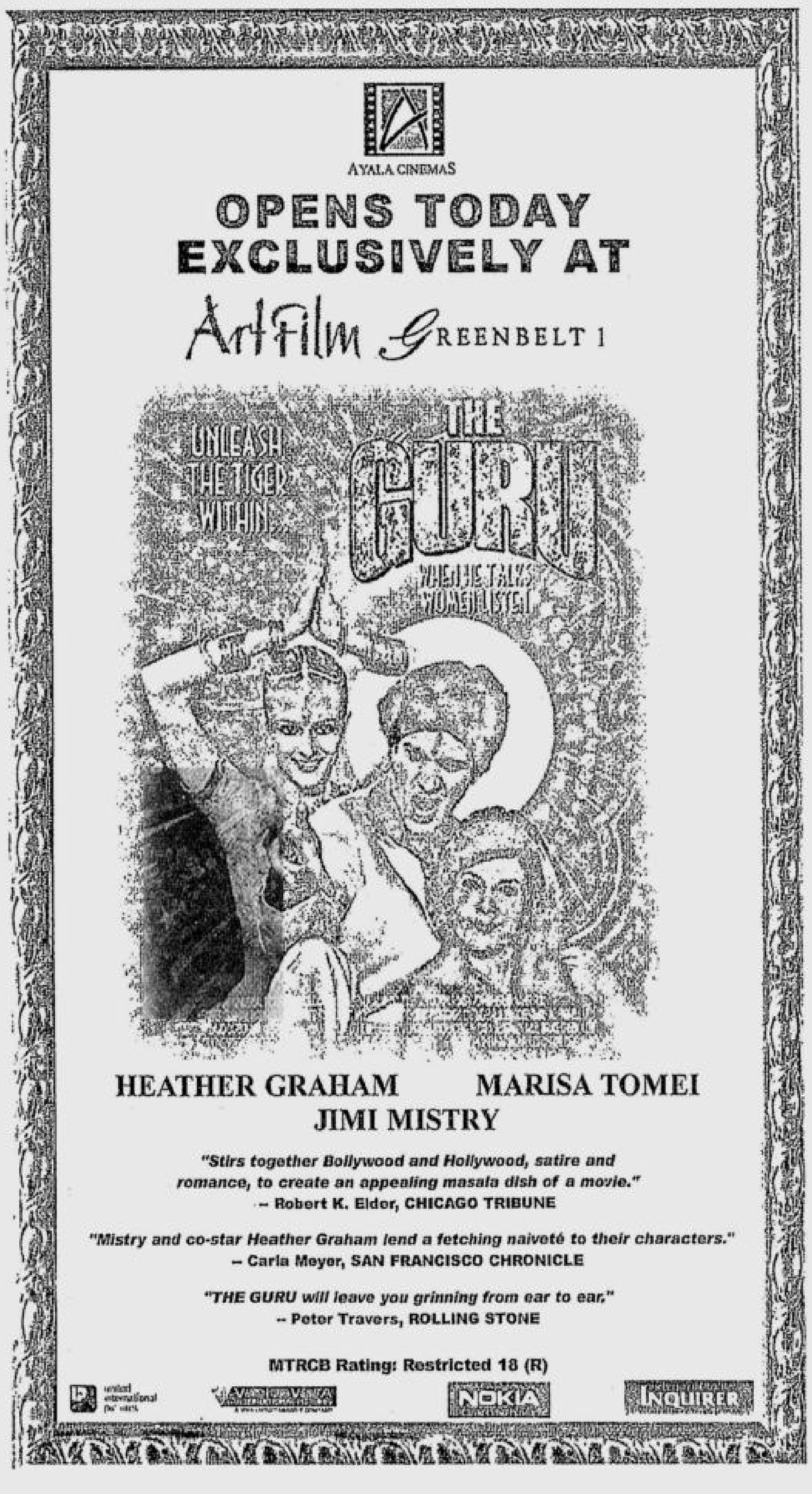

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– Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

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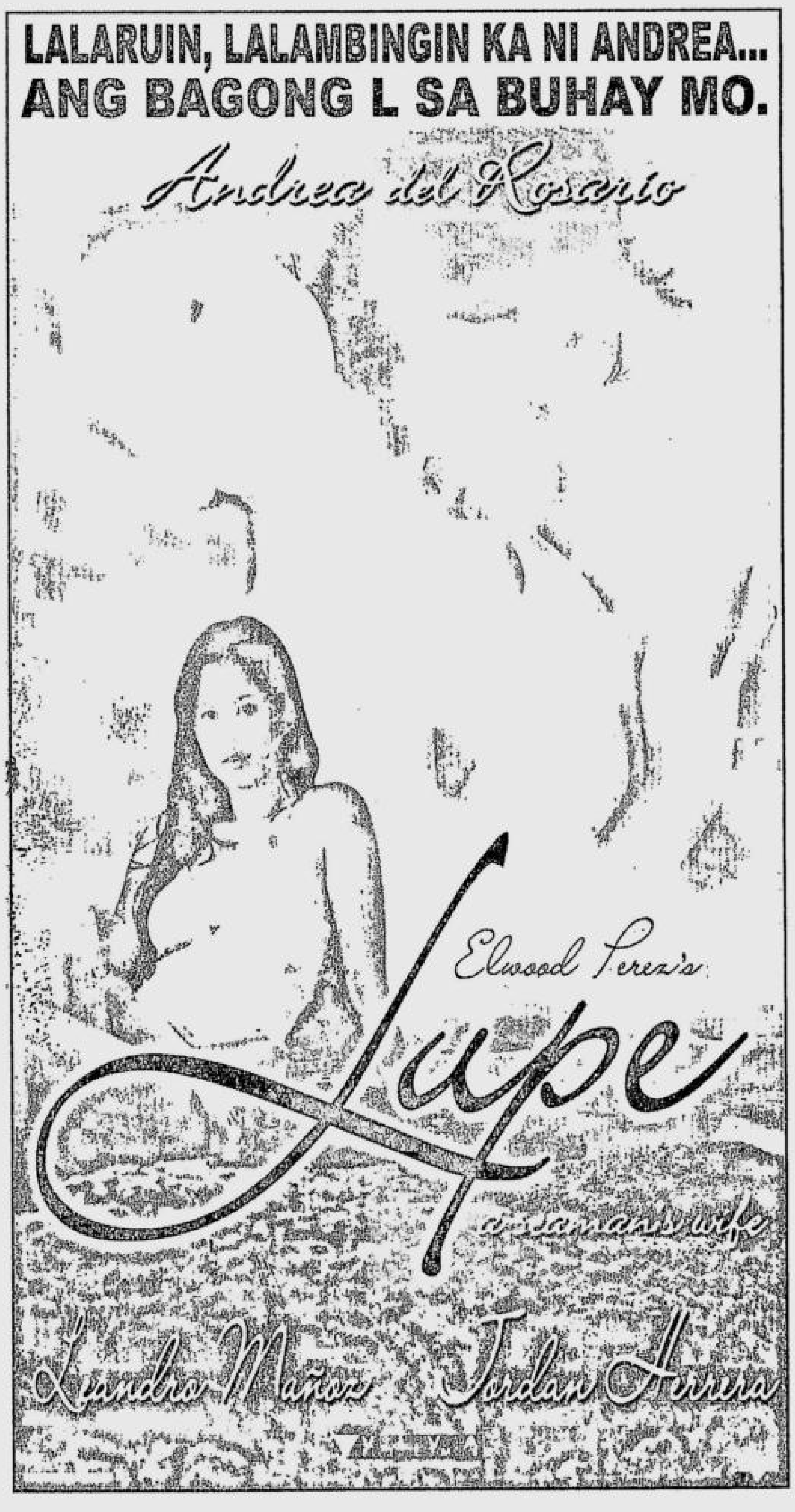


LALARUIN, LALAMBINGIN KA NI ANDREA...
ANG BAGONG L SA BUHAY MO.

Andrea del Rosario

Elwood Perez's
Lupe

Leandro Muñoz Jordan Herrera

Are Jericho and Kristine in love for real?

WHAT'S the real score between screen sweethearts **Jericho Rosales** and **Kristine Hermosa**? Are they in love for real or are they simply taking the fans for a ride to drum up interest for their soap series and their films?

If they did fall in love once, are Jericho and Kristine no longer together now?

Jericho is said to be dating show biz newcomer **Cindy Kurleto**, while Kristine has been seen with **Luis Manzano** a couple of times.

In a recent interview on ABS-CBN's "Morning Girls," Kristine hinted that something is wrong with her real-life romance with Jericho. The two are paired anew in the upcoming Star Cinema romance-drama, "Ngayong Nandito Ka," a follow up to their smash hit, "Forevermore."

Kristine said, however, that things can be easily patched up between her and Echo, her pet name for Jericho.

Kristine reportedly started getting jealous when she learned that her Echo was dating Cindy, who is being introduced in "Ngayong Nandito Ka."

The friction was said to have started on the set of the movie, where a "love triangle" inevitably developed.

Kristine reportedly didn't believe Echo when he told her Cindy is simply his friend. Yet, Echo said he welcomes Kristine's jealous nature because that only means she loves him.

Interestingly, the three stars all hail from Bicol. Although Cindy was born in Vienna, Austria, she traces her Filipino roots to Legaspi City. Jericho is from Boa, Camarines Sur and Kristine is from Masbate.

BROADWAY GIRL. Lea Salonga as Mei-Li in "Flower Drum Song."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

Jericho and Kristine endlessly deny any relationship outside their loveteam, which prompted the entertainment press to recall the romance of the late **Rico Yan** and **Claudine Barretto**. Even if Rico and Claudine had been having kinks in their relationship, they made it appear that they were still very much in love, especially when they were promoting their film, "Got To Believe."

There's nothing wrong with telling the truth. The best love teams, after all, don't have real-life romances, yet still manage to be popular at the tills. Look at **Christopher de Leon** and **Vilma Santos** or **Richard Gomez** and **Sharon Cuneta**. Through the years and many movies, those two durable screen tandems still prove to be huge box office draws.

Jericho and Kristine are perhaps worried that their fans would no longer support their loveteam once it is learned they are no longer in love for real. But they should also bear in mind that in this industry, it pays to be honest.

"Ngayong Nandito Ka" also stars **Onemig Bondoc** as the young entrepreneur who marries Kristine in the movie. At the helm is **Jerry Sineneng**.

Anti-drug campaign ad

AN MTV-type ad conceptualized and produced to boost the anti-drug campaign, will soon be aired in local cinemas in between screenings of films and on all TV networks.

The two authors of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (Republic Act 9165)—Sen. **Robert Z. Barbers** and Bukidnon 3rd District Rep. **Miguel F Zubiri**—press for a tougher and more comprehensive drug enforcement campaign through the 90-second ad. It will be aired as part of the developmental plugging and public service of local networks and cinemas, after the proponents of the Dangerous Drugs Act requested for free airtime.

Noted director **Erik Matti**, whose credits include "Scorpio Nights 2," "Ekis" and "Prosti," megged the ad, which topbills upcoming actor **Juan Marco Cruz** and veteran stage actor **Jake Macapagal**.

Barbers and Zubiri delivered their respective anti-drug sentiments in the TV ad.

Despite continuing efforts by all concerned sectors of society, drug addiction remains one of the most persistent evils that continues to rear its ugly head and wreak havoc not just on the fragile minds and bodies of today's youth, but also shatter the tight-knit relationships of the Filipino family," Barbers maintains.

For his part, Zubiri says, "We cannot continue to tolerate this vicious crime. We cannot shrug off its adverse effects simply because our family members seem to be the least likely candidates for drug abuse. The bottom line is, it's high time the government cracks down on the culprits and inflict harsher punishment and stiffer penalties on the erring drug users and traffickers."

The commercial was conceptualized by ALV Consultus Advertising Inc. creative director **Jun Poblador**, with additional sequence treatments supplied by award-winning screenwriter **Roy Iglesias**.

"We wanted the ad to have a more realistic vibe," explains ALV Advertising creative director Jun Poblador. "By showing real-life stories from both the higher and lower rungs of society, we are actually exposing the grim, but undeniable truth that drug users are not just the gaunt and shabby-looking misfits in the slums. They can also be the best looking guys in the party, the ones who drive flashy cars, the least we expect to be fanning the flames of this menacing plague."

Birthday girl

BELATED happy birthday to Broadway star **Lea Salonga**, who turned 32 last Saturday, Feb. 22.

Lea is still in New York, where she is starring in the Broadway run of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, "Flower Drum Song."

Incidentally, the soundtrack of "Flower Drum Song" with Lea has been released locally by BMG Records (Pilipinas), Lea's long-time record label.

Lea reprises the role of Mei-Li in "Flower Drum Song," which opened in New York last October, after its successful run at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles in 2001, also with Lea in the lead.

The musical was first staged in Broadway in 1958.

In the CD, Lea renders the well-loved tunes like "Love Look Away" and "I Enjoy Being a Girl," which she rendered live during her sold-out Broadway concert last year.

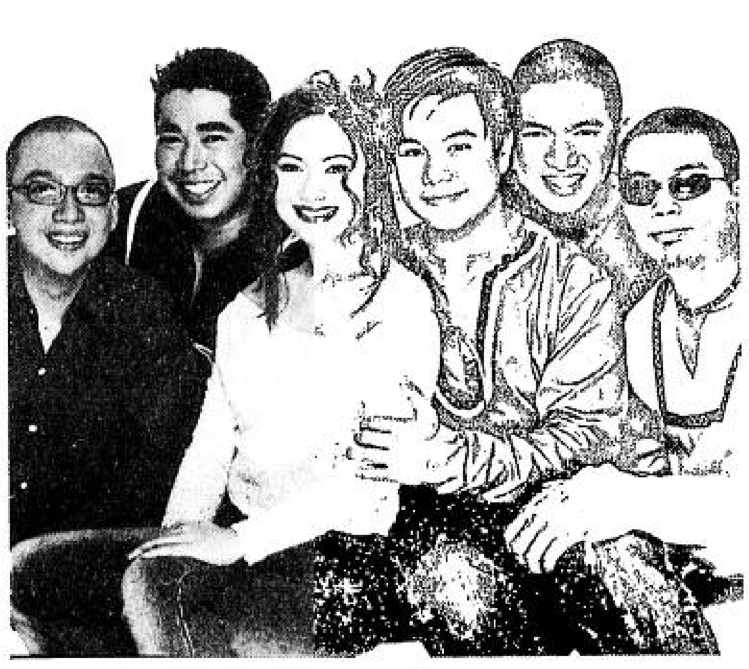
Lea is joined by noted Asian actors in the cast such as **Jose Llana** who plays her leading man Ta, and **Sandra Allen** as the sultry Linda Low.

The new Broadway cast recording of "Flower Drum Song" is also presented by Bayo, the trendy garment line which Lea exclusively endorses.

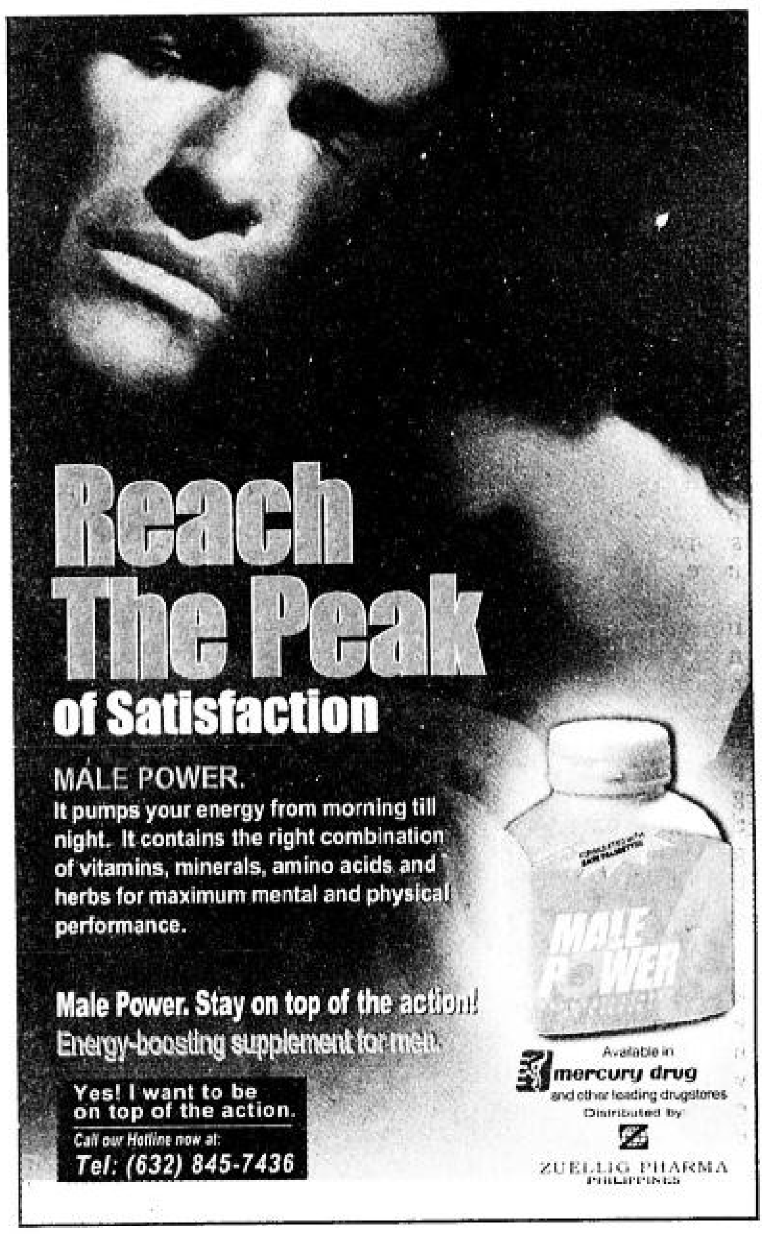
With her return to Broadway in "Flower Drum Song," Lea is pining for another Tony Award, to repeat her stage triumph in "Miss Saigon."

REEL BUT NOT REAL? Jericho Rosales and Kristine Hermosa teamup anew in "Ngayong Nandito Ka."

ANTI-DRUG ACT PROPONENTS. Bukidnon Rep. Miguel Zubiri (left) and Sen. Robert Barbers.



FREESTYLE AT SIETE PECADOS
After conquering the Big Dome not just once, but thrice, Freestyle holds an intimate show where they will perform their hits before a more select audience. The six-member band from Davao takes centerstage tonight at Siete Pecados of Westin Philippine Plaza. Freestyle will render their hits like "Before I Let You Go," "So Slow," "Bakit Iniwan Na" and "Good Luv," plus a repertoire of pop and R&B music. The show is produced by RRCM and M-1 Entertainment. Radio sponsors are 92.3 and 105.1 Crossover. Tickets are at P5000, plus P350 consumable. For reservations, call 551-5555 or RRCM at 534-3526. Last Jan. 30, Tricks Gel, Deowhite, La Cremeria, Kiwi and Eskinol Wash presented Freestyle at the UST High School JS Prom held at the Fiesta Pavilion of Manila Hotel.



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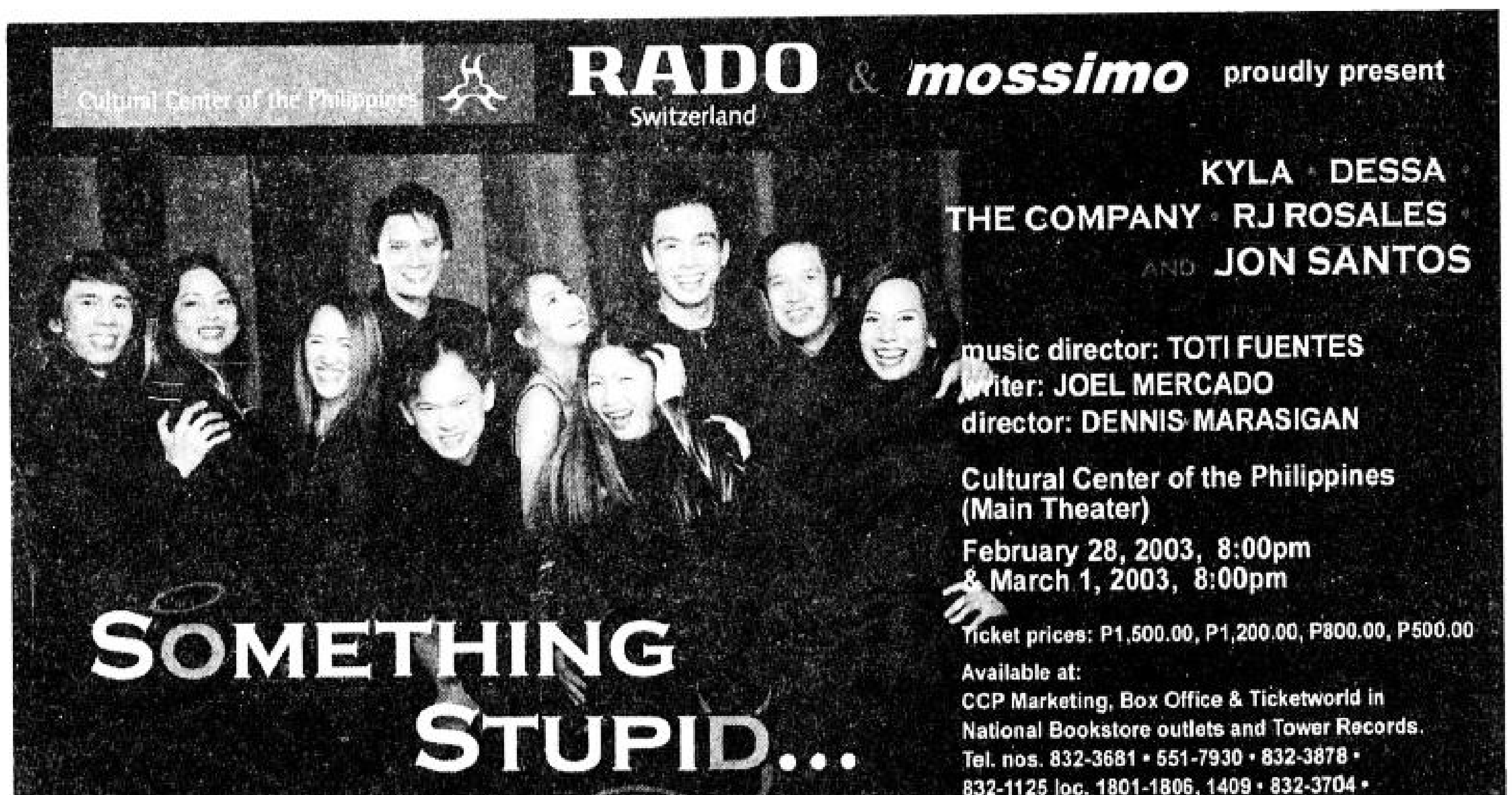

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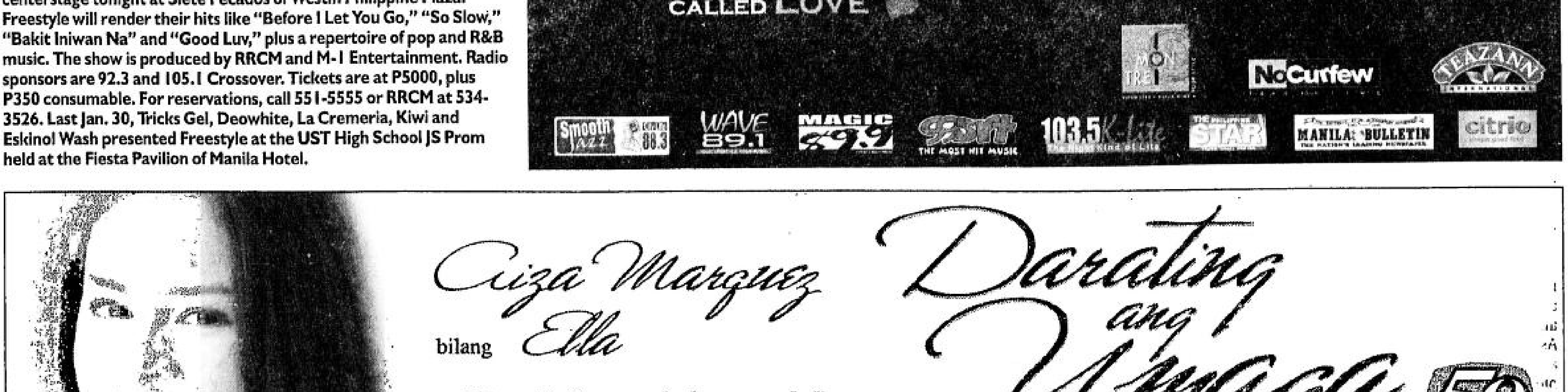

Aiza Marquez
bilang Ella
"Kung hindi mo na ako kayang mahalin,
hayaan mong mahalin kita."
Darating ang Umaga
Abangan
Sa Teleserye Primetime Bida
50 YEARS ABS-CBN TELEVISION

What will happen to the Powerboys?

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

NOW that the Powerboys' contract wasn't renewed by ABS-CBN for the new "Magandang Tanghali Bayan" and they are not allowed to use the name Powerboys anymore since that's Channel 2's property, what will happen to their upcoming album under Universal Records? Will they repackage themselves using a new name?

Of course, the recall factor of their original name would be an advantage in selling their album.

But how true are murmurs that the group was dropped like a hot potato by ABS-CBN because most of them have become so unprofessional?

Too bad that they couldn't handle fame properly so now the Powerboys have to contend with a major power failure.

Just asking

NOW that Mayor **Joey Marquez** has joined **Richard Gomez, Paolo Bediones** and **Janice de Belen** in "S-Files," will he eventually be reprimanded by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) since some politicians are being asked to justify why they host a TV program? It would be a loss to "S-Files" if Joey leaves because his candor and charm are something not all TV hosts innately possess.

* * *

In the latest ratings, "Morning Girls" with **Korina Sanchez** and **Kris Aquino**, has toppled "Sis" with Janice and **Gelli de Belen**.

Korina and Kris have the right combination of wit and spunk. They are both empowered women that's why they make quite a formidable tandem.

I'm sure Janice and Gelli will not take this sitting down.

* * *

Could it be true that after "MTB's" final episode last Friday, **Amy Perez**, one of the hosts who wasn't retained in the new noontime show, signed up to star in a soap opera in the rival network GMA 7?

The rigodon of stars from one station to another is already a given in the unpredictable world of television. Nobody really is indispensable.

The grass always seems greener on the other side, so that we sometimes can't help but turn green with envy until we realize that it's only artificial turf.

* * *

What could be the motive of **Alma Moreno** for kissing former Pres. **Cory Aquino** and addressing her as "Mommy" when they bumped into each other at Manay **Gina de Venecia**'s birthday bash last week?

After her ballyhooed tiff with Kris Aquino over Mayor Joey Marquez, was Alma deliberately mocking Kris? Hasn't she said enough during their confrontation at the hospital when Joey was confined?

Besides, Kris and Joey have called it quits, so I wonder why Alma had to resort to such sarcastic techniques. Or does she feel that it's not really over between her estranged hubby and Kristeta?

Guess list

THIS matinee idol gets a kick out of invading various chatrooms and sets up "eyeballs." He's got his eyes set on "balls," that is. He hooks up with cute young boys and not with pretty young things.

This TV host slashed his wrist in his desperate bid to make his "on and off" girlfriend (also a TV host) stay. Too bad for him because it seems his paramour is holding on like a leech to a powerful tycoon. Love becomes immaterial to a material girl!

Get well soon, Ces

I GOT so worried when I read about **Ces Drilon**'s car mishap. Ces happens to be one of my few true friends in the biz, although there's nothing "show biz" about our friendship.

I texted her immediately after I heard the news and I was relieved when she texted me back.

Ces' message goes, "Thanks. The reports are wrong. The driver did not surrender voluntarily. It was a taxi driver who saw the plate number of the Pajero that's why its driver was apprehended. It was a hit and run.

"Thank God, I had my seatbelt on. I was supposed to have a stitch on my brow, but my doctor used this new glue thing that's sort of a skin adhesive."

Ces is indeed such a go-getter. Instead of having a driver, she'd rather drive. She's not one who would delegate things that she can do herself. That's how driven she is.

Just take it easy on the road next time, my dear Ces. If only there could be a "driver-coding" scheme, so as to separate the reckless from the courteous ones, then there will be fewer road mishaps.

Personal

ENDLESS thanks to **Sharon Cuneta-Pangilinan** for not being too much of a megastar to be a mega-friend.

Birthday hugs and kisses to my funky make-up artist in ABS-CBN **Marley Aquino**.

Thanks "Miss Ganda" for making me ready for my close-up.

Happy birthday to my *kumare* through thick and thin, **Terry Cruz**.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

Film from Iran tops KL festival

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Feb. 18, after two full days of screening some 40 movies, the Kuala Lumpur World Film Festival for motion pictures espousing peace held its awards night at KL's Mandarin Oriental Hotel. The winners:

First, the Jury Merit Awards: For Peace, "La Grande Illusion," France. For Humanities, "Sayang Salmah," Malaysia. For Non-Discrimination, "Sa Tree Lex (The Iron Lady)," Thailand. And for Friendship, "Por Si No Te Vuelvo a Ver (In Case I Won't See You Again)," Mexico.

The major Perdana awardees: Third prize, "Nowhere in Africa," Germany. Second prize, "Born in Absurdistan," Austria. And first prize, "Under the Moonlight," Iran.

The awards were presented by no less than the King and Queen of Malaysia, His Majesty the **Yang Di-Pertuan Agong XII** and Her Majesty the **Raja Permaisuri Agong**.

The film people present at the awarding ceremonies were heartened to hear that the new festival was deemed so successful that it would be held annually from here on.

They hoped that this regular showcase for pro-peace and anti-war films would effect a positive change in the movie fare produced by different countries.

Other countries that screened films at the new festival included Italy, New Zealand, Syria, the Philippines, Morocco, Finland, Namibia, Uzbekistan, China, Switzerland, Bosnia, Britain, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Kyrgyz, U.A.E., Finland, Albania, Ghana, India, Spain, Lebanon, Japan, South Korea, Egypt, Myanmar, Holland, Hungary, Australia, Turkey, Colombia and Indonesia.

Focus on Akira Kurosawa

AKIRA Kurosawa has been hailed as Japanese film master of international stature. For his part, the much younger **Kiyoshi Kurosawa** is also making a name for himself on the global scene, as a maker of innovative horror movies.

His works are featured in Eiga Sai 2003's filmfest, which unreels tonight at Shangri-La Plaza Mall's Cinema 1 (until March 4).

The festival's opening film is Kurosawa's "Charisma" (1999), about a veteran detective who is banished from the force after he fouls up a hostage crisis. He flees in humiliation to a remote area where he discovers a mysterious tree.

Other movies by Kiyoshi Kurosawa to be screened: "Cure" (1997), a murder mystery. "Suit Yourself or Shoot Yourself: The Heist," about two gangsters and a nurse involved in a drug deal with the Yakuza.

"License to Live," about a boy who wakes up from a 10-year coma to discover that his parents have gone their separate ways. "Serpent Path," a tale of death and treachery. And "Barren Illusion," about two lovers and their strained but caring relationship.

Screenings are at 3 p.m., 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Admission is free. Call 635-2079.

Schedule: Feb. 27-3 p.m., "Cure." 5:30 p.m., "License." 8 p.m., "Barren."

March 1-3 p.m., "Suit." 5:30 p.m., "Cure." 8 p.m., "Serpent." March 2 - 3 p.m., "Barren." 5:30 p.m., "Charisma." 8 p.m., "License."

March 3 - 3 p.m., "License." 5:30 p.m., "Barren." 8 p.m., "Cure." March 4 - 3 p.m., "Serpent." 5:30 p.m., "Suit." 8 p.m., "Charisma."

'The Unsaid'

AT 10:45 p.m. on Feb. 28, the Cinemax movie channel screens the **Andy Garcia** starrer, "The Unsaid."

Emotionally devastated by the suicide of his teenage son, a psychologist (Garcia) gives up his practice. However, a former student (**Vincent Kartheiser**) asks him to help him get over the guilt he feels after his son's death.

By probing into his former student's gruesome past, the psychologist detects traits that remind him of his son. Soon, the lines begin to blur between the doctor's past and his patient's. The young man then turns the tables by secretly delving into the psychologist's past. **Tom McLoughin** directs.

'Taboo on NGC'

"TABOO" on the National Geographic Channel on Feb. 26 at 10 p.m. focus on the "forbidden" topic of voodoo. The practice is deemed to be "the ultimate outcast" because it incorporates scary elements like possession and black magic.

The program traces the start of voodoo to Benin, where it was used as a means of tapping into spirit powers. Moving across the ocean to Naiti, it adopted new influences, from slavery to Catholicism. In Venezuela, even historical figures are said to have the power to possess the living.

Meet VJ Luis...

From page A30

lakwatsa, party only on weekends'," Luis shares. "That's why I was surprised when he told me that I could do 'MYX' if I wanted to."

Luis recently signed a six-month contract with ABS-CBN to become the newest host of "MYX," the only local music channel in the Philippines. Luis hosts "Urban MYX," which features R&B, rap and hip-hop music.

"So before my dad could change his mind, I asked ABS-CBN to sign me up immediately," quips Luis in exactly the deadpan manner of his father.

'Myx' perks

"Seriously, what excites me about being a VJ for 'Myx' is the idea of going to places and getting to know a lot of people," he adds.

Does "people" specifically mean girls for Luis?

"I expect that would be one of the perks of being a VJ," he quips.

"Believe it or not, I'm a one-woman man. I love commitment in a relationship, as opposed to having many girls," he asserts.

His one-year relationship with model Nancy Castiglione has already ended, with Nancy announcing it in a very emotional TV interview.

Luis insists there was never a third party involved. "There were just certain components in the relationship that were lacking," says Luis, but he refuses to discuss the matter any further.

Luis is said to have dated Anne Curtis and, more recently, Kristine Hermosa. He has been vocal about "wanting to know Kristine better," leading people to conclude that the real-and-reel love team of Kristine and Jericho Rosales is on the rocks.

Grocery bonding

"I do find her interesting," Luis insists. "Hers is one of the most beautiful faces on TV. But I just want to know her. I'm not asking her to marry me."

He admits that aside from dining out with the actress, he once accompanied Kristine to buy groceries.

"The grocery store is not a romantic location but is definitely a good place to bond," he says. "I got to know what's inside her refrigerator."

Luis says he plans to go into the food business after he finishes college. "Food is where the money is because Filipinos love to eat," he says.

He says he likes to cook seafood for his family, especially sautéed shrimps which he considers his specialty.

Asked what kind of food would best represent him, Luis likens himself to a chocolate bar. "I can be really delightful and irresistible, but too much of me can be bad for you," he says.

Danny brings fruit drink to RP

DANNY Javier is better known as one-third of the popular singing trio, Apo Hiking Society. But aside from being a singer and songwriter, Danny is also an entrepreneur. His latest venture is the popular Nekta Liquid Kiwi Fruit Drink, which he brings to the country.

Danny's company, Business Ventures, which started out with Pidro T-shirts, is the exclusive Philippine' distributor of Nekta Kiwifruit Concentrate, a ready-to-drink health juice made from whole kiwifruit.

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FOUR FEATHERS P13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	EXTREMIST P13 11:35, 1:40, 3:45, 5:50, 7:55, 10:99	DAREDEVIL P13 12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:10

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	NGAYON NANDITO KA
Ali 2	NYMPHA
Ali 3	TREASURE PLANET
Ali 4	DAREDEVIL
Ali 5	FOUR FEATHERS
Ali 6	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
Ali 7	EXTREMISTS
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	LEGEND OF CROCODILE
Farmers 2	DAREDEVIL
ARANETA COLISEUM	
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MARCH 1	JOLINA MANIA CONCERT
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'OFF KEY'

Three tenors fail to hit high notes

By Seymour Barros Sanchez
Contributor

SLAPSTICK. "Off Key" cast (from left) Joe Mantegna, Claudia Gerini, George Hamilton and Anna Galiena.

A FEW Saturdays ago, I was able to catch the Instituto Cervantez screening of the Spanish romantic comedy "Love Can Seriously Damage Your Health." Starring a young Penelope Cruz, the film is a love story made interesting by its many twists and turns, starting with a Beatles visit to Spain. It was directed by Manuel Gomez Perreira.

REVIEW

So, when I learned that "Off Key" is also a product of the same director, curiosity brought me to the nearest art film theater screening the said movie. This time, Perreira capitalizes on the popularity of the three tenors.

Although the story is not about Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras and Luciano Pavarotti, the main characters resemble the much-acclaimed trio in some ways.

The movie has some Spanish and Italian performers in the cast, but the story is told in English, and so viewers partial to Hollywood productions have no subtitles to worry about.

Slapstick

Ricardo Palacios (Joe Mantegna), Armand Dupres (George Hamilton) and Fabrizio Bernini (Danny Aiello) vow never to sing together again after a forgettable performance in Mexico City. Before their disastrous show, which has them singing "Guadalajara" while wearing Mexican sombreros, Ricardo is hit in the crotch by wife Rita (Anna Galiena) after a failed murder attempt on her unfaithful husband.

During the performance itself, one of their back-up dancers steps on the hand of Fabrizio who is looking for his lucky charm on the stage, while another one bumps into Armand who is uneasy with his sombrero.

Thus, what we witness on stage is a Spanish tenor writhing in pain, an Italian tenor holding his hurting hand, and a French tenor itching to remove the funny thing on his head, giving us an early impression that we are watching a slapstick comedy on opera.

Ten years after, the three tenors unexpectedly reunite in a French chateau in time for the wedding of Armand and Carmen (Ariadna Gil). Carmen is the daughter and only child from the failed marriage of Ricardo and Rita, who eventually married another tenor, Fabrizio.

The now struggling Ricardo hires Violeta (Claudia Gerini); a hooker and a small-time actress, to act as his fiancée to boost his ego in front of Armand, who has inherited the properties of his late wife, and the relatively well-off Fabrizio.

Complications

Further complicating their interrelated lives is Armand's son Maurice (Ashley Hamilton) who has been attracted to Carmen since childhood, their butler Ivo (Geoffrey Bateman) who hates the spoiled Carmen and her allergy to flowers, and Norma (Tiffany Hofstetter), Fabrizio's daughter from another marriage who dislikes having a stepmother and enjoys basking in their fame and fortune.

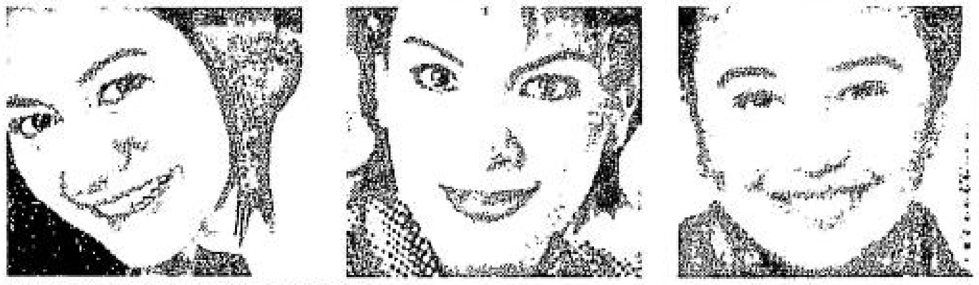
Writers Yolanda Garcia Serrano, Juan Luis Iborra and Joaquin Oristrell weave a funny tale of love and money for Perreira, who also directed the witty female flick "Why Do They Say Love When They Mean Sex?" Each character seems to have a unique secret to tell, with the viewer expecting to discover who slept with whom and when. However, the material is too stretched out as it also covers bruised egos, greed, jealousy, revenge, dishonesty, and differing views on opera.

Technically, the movie is good, with the opera-inspired performances serving as an added bonus to lovers of classical music. However, the script does not have enough funny scenes to make the movie memorable.

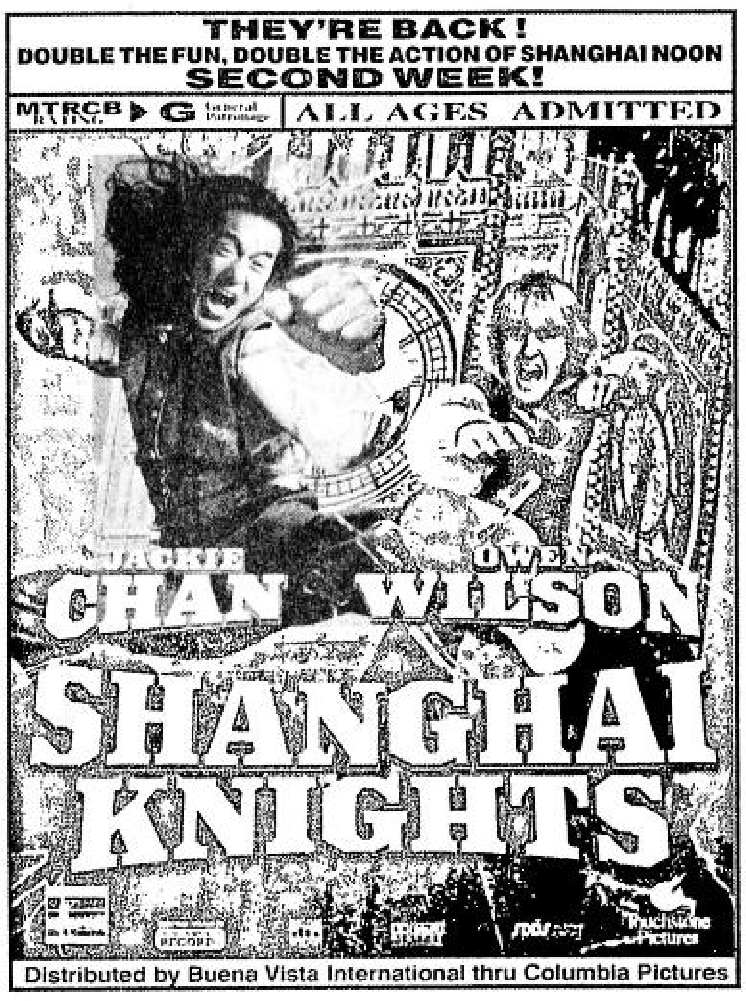
The scene where the trio sings the "Macarena" for the king of Spain while the audience stands up to dance with them is reminiscent of cheap local comedy flicks which once made coming to the cinema a horrible experience for many of us.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	KAPAG BUMAYO PALAY / UNFAITHFUL CONCUBINE
ODEON	DAREDEVIL
ODEON-2	MALDITA / STRIP SHOW
ROBEN	BUKANG BIBIG
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	HALLOWEEN / ONE WRONG TURN
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	NYMPHA
CORONET B	FEMME FATALE / STICKMEN
QUEZON-1	BUKANG BIBIG
REMAR	DAREDEVIL
REMAR-2	BUKANG BIBIG
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	NGAYONG NANDITO KA
B	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-2	DAREDEVIL
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	NYMPHA
CINEMA-2	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-3	MAGNIFICO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DAREDEVIL
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HERO
CINEMA-6	TOMAGAN
CINEMA-7	AB NORMAL COLLEGE
CINEMA-8	ABANDON
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	DEREDEVIL
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DAREDEVIL
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SHANGHAI KNIGHTS
CINEMA-12	4 FEATHERS
CINEMA-14	AMAZON
CINEMA-15	THEY
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LNES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA



'MUSIC FROM THE HEART'
Three of the country's best voices – Kyla, Aiza Seguerra and Jamie Rivera – performed in a fundraising concert, "Music From the Heart," last Feb. 6 at the St. Jerome Emiliani Institute in Molino, Bacoor, Cavite. The artists delighted the crowd with their respective hits like Aiza's "Pagdating ng Panahon," Kyla's "I Wanna Get Close To You" and Jamie's "The Mission" and "Only Selfless Love." The concert is presented by Unilever Philippines, makers of Close-Up, and also in part by Compass Internet, Kiwi Shoe Polish and Avon Color.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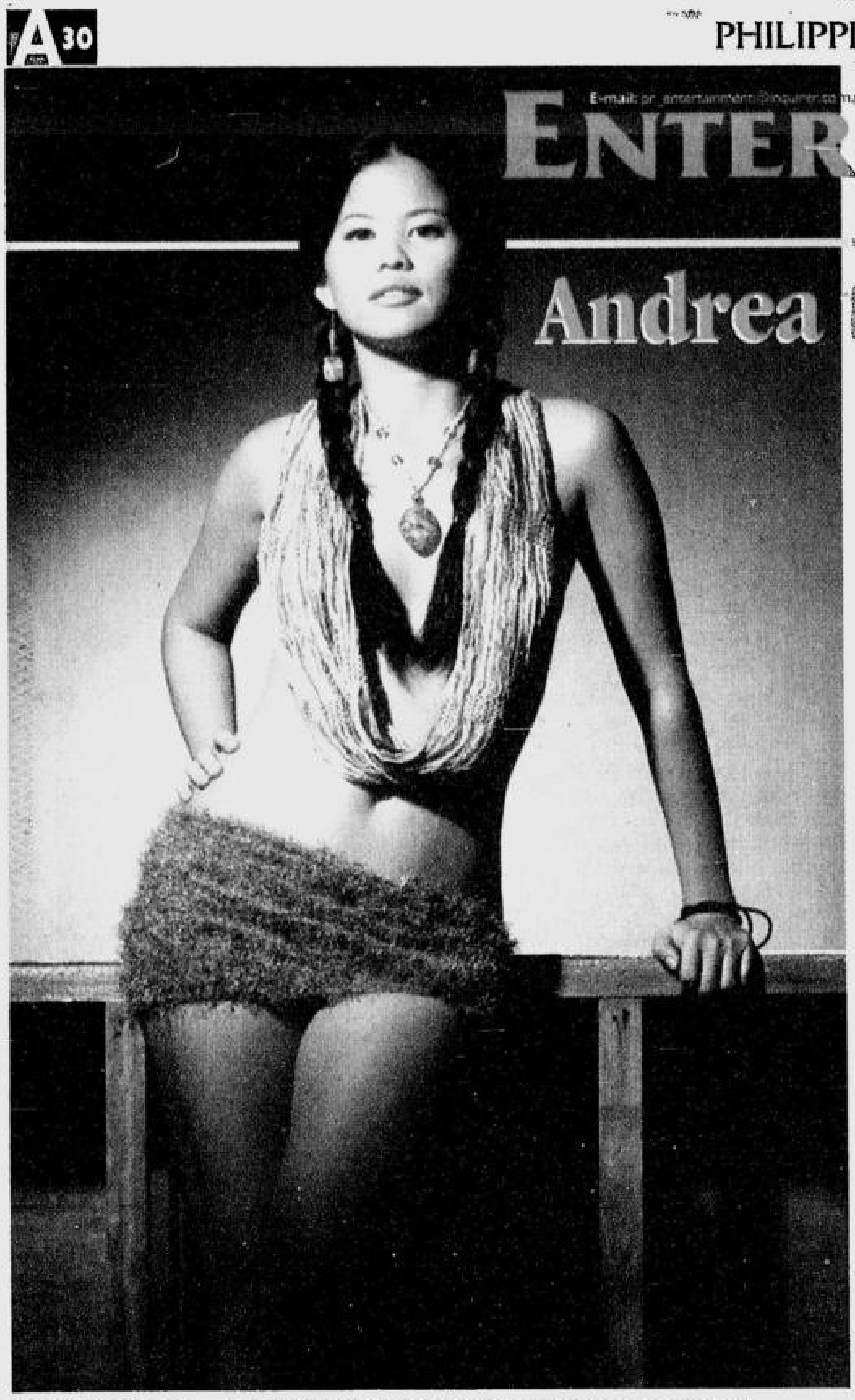
Editor **Louie C. Camino**



STUNNING FORM. Andrea del Rosario says she's old enough to decide for herself.

Andrea tackles life among seamen

By Remy Umerez
Contributor

THE FIRST time we talked to Andrea del Rosario was at the press conference for "Bestman," featuring Ogie Alcasid and Michael V.

We remembered it was about that time that she hinted, but had not yet decided, on going bold.

So what took her so long to decide?

"Actually, *matagal kong pinag-isipan ang bagay na ito,*" Del Rosario said. "I had sleepless nights figuring out the pros and cons (of going bold)."

She said she wanted everything to go right the first time.

"As in the right story, right director, and right timing. I talked to my parents because I need their full support."

"At first they were reluctant, which was understandable until they realized that I am old enough to decide for myself and I am free to do whatever I want to do in life."

"Then they promised always to support me," she said.

Career move

Her transfer to Viva was a career move, she said. She also denied rumors that she was neglected by her former studio.

Del Rosario, who has a stunning form at 36-25-36, used to be a member of the ABS-CBN Talent Center, and was among the lead characters in the shortlived ABS-CBN comedy show "Atta Girl."

She has done several modelling stints and has appeared in a commercial.

"When Viva revealed what they had in mind for me, I was moved," Del Rosario said. "It is something no newcomer would dare ignore. I would not want to pass up a good opportunity such as the one offered.

"Besides, ABS-CBN does not produce sexy films."

Andrea has seen the kind of full-blast promotions the Viva outfit has launched for Katya Santos and Maui Taylor—wholesome starlets that were turned into sex sirens overnight.

"Viva delivers, unlike others who make promises that remain unfulfilled," she said.

Too hot for TV

For starters, Andrea is one of the eight sexy beauties to be featured in the Viva Hot Babes VCD. The VCD may be best described as an erotic extravaganza, too steamy for movies, and too hot for TV.

Viva Hot Babes is a new group—the first of its kind—offering up sex kittens Maui Taylor, Katya Santos and Andrea.

Rising stars Kristine Jaca, Jen Rosendahl, FHM Girlfriends Miles Hernandez, Gwen Garcia and Hazel Cabrera complete the lineup.

Being a member of the group, says Andrea, is proving to be a boost to her career.

On March 5 and 6, they will be presented in a series of fashion shows entitled "Viva Hot Babes in the Flash" to be held at the Tent, The Fort.

On the same day, her launching movie "Lupe" (seaman's wife) will open nationwide.

In "Lupe," Andrea plays the role of a seaman's wife whose peaceful life is shattered when a stranger, Elmo (Jordan Herrera) enters her life.

The role of the seaman is essayed by Leandro Muñoz, who is alsd going bold for the first time on screen.

Exotic and dusky

"Lupe" is a film of many firsts.

For one, the movie marks the return of Elwood Perez, tagged as the creator of sex films.

And what is his impression of Andrea?

"Her beauty reminds me of Tetchie Agbayani and Ma. Isabel Lopez, both exotic and dusky," Perez said.

The director also takes his hat off to today's crop of starlets.

"Bold stars nowadays don't give directors too much headache, as far as removing their clothes is concerned," he said. "They will not even make a fuss whether they get to cover their private parts with plaster.

"Their way of thinking is, they are so prepared *na.*"

Of Andrea, Perez said that all she needs is "careful motivation to turn herself into a good actress."

"Eventually *diyan din siya tutuloy,*" the director said.

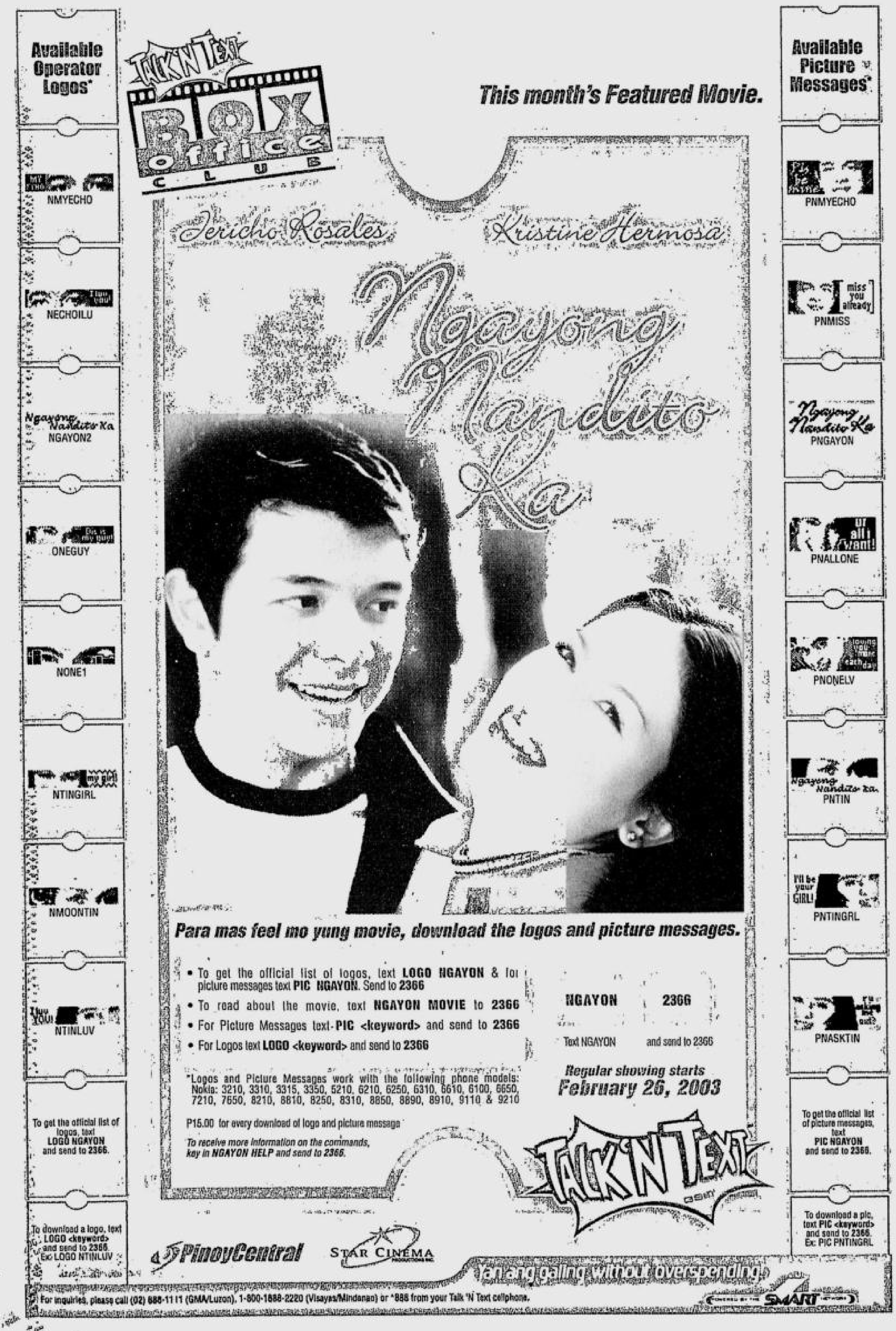
Andrea returns the compliment by saying that she is honored to be under Elwood.

"I consider myself very lucky," she said. "He knows his craft and that spells a great difference.

"He is very helpful in the sense that he acts out the scenes for me. *Ganyan siya mag-motivate sa artista.*"

After "Lupe" things will never be the same again for Andrea, who is prioritizing her movie career above everything else.

Menfolk will see more of her when she graces the cover of a men's magazine this March.



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'ATE' VI'S CHARM. New VJ Luis Manzano finally becomes an official member of show biz.
PHOTO LIFTED FROM STAR STUDIO MAGAZINE

Meet VJ Luis

By Marinel R. Cruz

LUIS PHILIPPE Manzano, the son of actress and Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos and drama actor/TV host Edu Manzano, says he still does not consider himself a celebrity.

His mom and dad did not raise him any differently from the way other children are raised, said the young man, who has outgrown his childhood nickname Lucky and now prefers to be called Luis.

"I had to work hard to get what I wanted, no extra benefits," he says. "I am a celebrity only by birth, nothing more."

Luis says he has his share of family woes like other normal children. His parents were separated when he was only three.

"I fully understand why they had to go their separate ways," he says, and adds with a shrug: "Why force two people who can't live together under one roof?"

His mother is now married to Sen. Ralph Recto, with whom she has a four-year-old son, Ryan Christian.

Luis says his parents never encouraged him to ride on their popularity, especially Edu who insists that Luis finish his studies first before going into show biz.

Surprised VJ

"I remember my dad saying that the worst thing that could happen to me is to be known merely as the son of Edu Manzano and Vilma Santos," he says.

Luis is taking up hotel and restaurant management at the College of St. Benilde. He says that while his mom has no fears about his joining the entertainment field, his dad, a former Makati City vice mayor, is unwavering in his rule that Luis should finish his studies first.

"My dad used to tell me, 'no

MEET VJ LUIS/ A28

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RP's foreign debt rises to $54.5B

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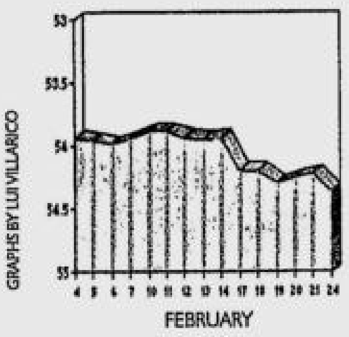


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P54.37 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb.24, 2003

¥118.58 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 24, 2003

GOLD: $352.50-353.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb.24, 2003

Feb. 25, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.927902	1.000000	54.238000
Japan	Yen	0.007819	0.008427	0.457100
United Kingdom	Pound	1.466271	1.580200	85.706900
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118980	0.128225	6.954700
Switzerland	Franc	0.680230	0.733084	39.761000
Canada	Dollar	0.616833	0.664761	36.055300
Singapore	Dollar	0.531840	0.573164	31.087300
Australia	Dollar	0.554037	0.597086	32.384800
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.461409	2.652661	143.875000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.247454	0.266681	14.464200
Brunei	Dollar	0.530321	0.571527	30.998500
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000112	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021657	0.023340	1.265900
UAE	Dirham	0.252662	0.272294	14.768700
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.077700	58.452300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.244217	0.263193	14.275100
Mexico	New Peso	0.084895	0.091491	4.962300
New Zealand	Dollar	0.517687	0.557911	30.260000
Norway	Kroner	0.132612	0.142916	7.751500
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026779	0.028860	1.565300

STOCK MARKET

Trading resumes today

FINANCIAL markets were closed yesterday for a national holiday celebrating the 1986 revolution that toppled former President Ferdinand Marcos.

Traders said the market would remain weak as it continued to brace for a possible US-led war on Iraq and threats of sanctions against the Philippines by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force against money laundering. The country has until March 15 to pass amendments to its anti-money laundering law to meet global standards.

Shares ended lower for the fifth straight session on Monday because of jitters over a possible war in Iraq and bombings in Mindanao.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended down 1.77 points, or 0.2 percent, at 1013.93, after shedding 0.7 percent Friday. The index has lost 2 percent since last Tuesday.

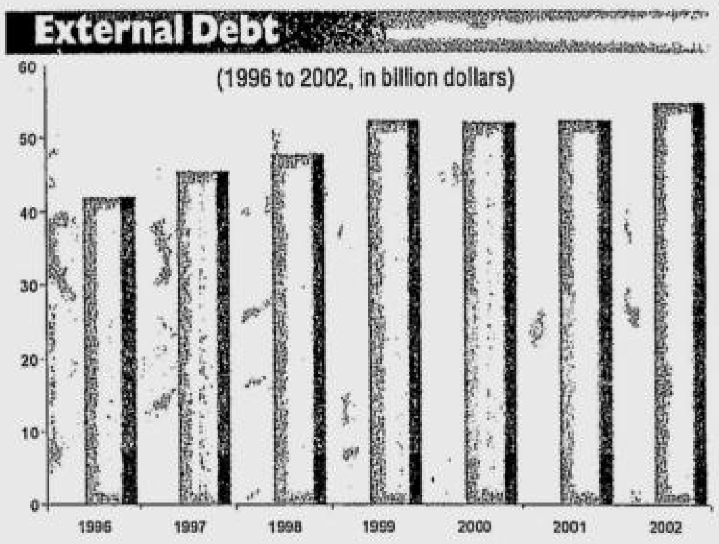
By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY'S external debt rose by 4 percent or $2.1 billion to $54.5 billion as of end-2002 from P52.4 billion the previous year as the government, including the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, borrowed heavily last year to settle maturing loans and finance a P212.7-billion budget gap.

Preliminary official data showed that the foreign debt grew by $900 million in the fourth quarter from $53.6 billion in the third quarter of 2002.

The BSP borrowed $675 million in July through a five-year facility underwritten by seven banks. The proceeds were used to pay $740 million in expensive loans that were to mature in April 2004.

External Debt



The central bank also raised an additional $300 million from the four-year bond market in January last year, a follow up to its $500-million bond issue in November 2001.

The national government borrowed a total of $2.85 billion in the offshore market, of which $750 million was relent to the state-owned National Power Corp., which also borrowed an additional $500 million from the 18-year Japanese bond market in December.

The national government borrowing included the $750 million in 15-year global bonds issued in January, $1 billion from the seven-year global bond market in March, another $300 million from the same market in May, $300 million from the five-year bond market in September, and $500 million from the 10-year global bond market in November.

Companies like PLDT, Globe Telecom and JG Summit also tapped the overseas market in 2002 in raising more than $1 billion worth of loans.

Government sources said the decline in the value of the peso also contributed in pushing the foreign debt stock higher. In 2002, the local currency averaged at P51.587 to $1 and closed the year at P53.254, a depreciation of 2.7 percent from the year before.

Meralco, Napocor set mediation on supply pact row

DISTRIBUTION giant Manila Electric Co. said it was readying for mediation procedures with National Power Corp. after the breakdown of negotiations on whether a 10-year supply contract was still valid.

Meralco chair Manuel Lopez said in an interview with reporters that the utility's board of directors had put up a short list of nominees for the mediator.

"We hope that we can agree (with Napocor) on a mutually acceptable name and start talks next week," Lopez said. He declined to disclose the names on the short list.

In an interview last month, Napocor president Rogelio Murga said Meralco has accumulated P14 billion in fines in 2002 for not following their supply contract.

The 10-year supply contract, which is supposed to expire in end-2004, provides that

MERALCO/ B3

RP seeks Korean funding for railway rehab program

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT will seek $125 million in overseas development assistance from the Export-Import Bank of Korea and the Korean Economic and Development Cooperation Fund to finally jumpstart the country's south railway rehabilitation program.

The borrower for the project, which will cover only the Caloocan-Alabang route or the first phase of the south railway system, will be the Philippine National Railways but with a guarantee from the national government, Assistant Director General for infrastructure Ruben Reinoso of the National Economic and Development Authority said in an interview.

Of the total amount, $50 million will be spent for the actual infrastructure upgrade while another $75 million will be used for the relocation of squatters who will be affected by the widening of the tracks, he said.

"We still have to negotiate with the Koreans for the financing," Reinoso said. "The loans will be tied to goods and services so we'll conduct a bidding for Korean contractors and suppliers."

"We want to do that this year. This will depend on whether we will be successful in moving the squatters out," he added.

"We will upgrade the tracks and stations, get more commuter trains and improve the railway communication and signaling system," Reinoso said.

A few years ago, the government awarded a $400-million BOT railway project to the Ayala group covering the Alabang to Calamba route, but the group backed out of the project last year, explaining that the economics of the railway project had changed over the last few years especially with the sharp peso depreciation against the dollar.

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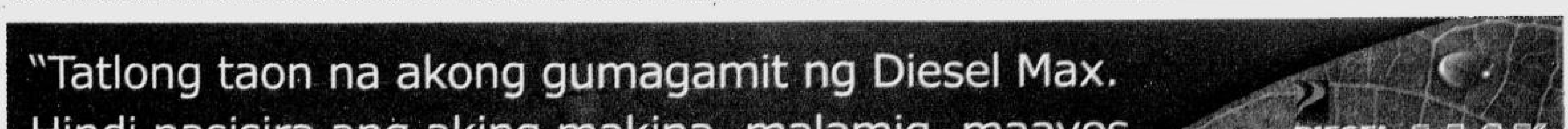

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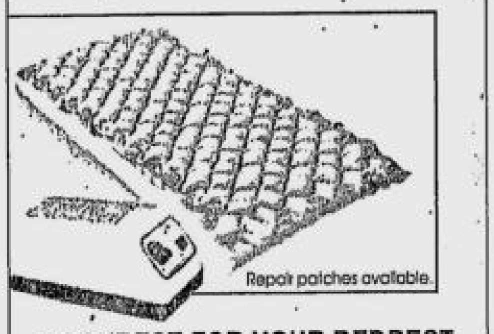
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LRT income up 5.4%

THE LIGHT Rail Transit Authority posted a 5.4-percent increase in revenues to P1.2 billion in 2002 from the previous year's P1.1 billion.

Serving more than 300,000 commuters a day, the railway earns an average P3.4 million worth of fares each day. Last year, the LRT served almost 105 million passengers.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said the ongoing expansion of the LRT railway system could further lift LRTA's revenues and passenger load.

At present, LRT line 1 has 18 stations from Baclaran to Monumento.

In April, the first phase of LRT line 2—from Santolan in Pasig to Cubao in Quezon City—will start serving commuters.

Line 2—the "Megatren"—is a 13.8-kilometer railway system that spans five cities: Pasig, Marikina, Quezon City, San Juan and Manila. It runs from Doroteo Jose in Manila to Santolan in Pasig, with 11 stations, including an underground terminal along Katipunan Avenue.

"Once operational, the Megatren will attract a considerable share of the riding public who are currently using public transport on already congested roads. The results will be less traffic congestion, less air pollution, a cleaner environment, less travel time, greater economic benefits and more comfort for passengers," Mendoza said.

Thompson Lantion, a spokesperson for the transportation department, said the LRT line 1 would be extended by 10 stations: Redemptorist, Manila International Airport, Asia World, Ninoy Aquino, Dr. Santos, Manuyo Uno, Las Piñas, Zapote, Talaba and Niyog.

BayanTel income down in 2002

BAYAN Telecommunications Inc. has reported chalking up lower revenues last year than in 2001 because of lower earnings from its landline operations and fewer subscribers.

Company documents showed that BayanTel earned some P4.9 billion last year, slightly lower than 2001's P5.1 billion.

Revenues from its landline service fell by almost 10 percent to around P1.8 billion from the previous year's P2 billion, as the company tried to boot out nonpaying customers.

The company's revenues from its data services compensated for its lower earnings from its landlines, growing 15.4 percent to P1.4 billion last year.

BayanTel chief finance officer Gary Olivar attributed BayanTel's higher earnings from data to its DSL Internet service and higher subscriptions for its other data services.

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AT&T already charging higher fees, papers show

By Abigail L. Ho

AT&T Corp. has already been charging its customers the higher rates that it has been complaining about, according to documents obtained by the INQUIRER.

These documents showed that AT&T informed its clients late last month that it would raise its charges for all countries it was servicing, including the Philippines.

The company said starting Feb. 1, it was charging rates of 12 US cents for fixed line and 16 US cents for mobile traffic, the same termination rates that Philippine carriers had implemented.

AT&T has filed a case before the US Federation Communications Commission against local carriers Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Globe Telecom Inc., Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc., Smart Communications Inc., Bayan Telecommunications Inc. and Subic Telecom for allegedly implementing the new rates unilaterally.

In a privilege speech, meanwhile, House defense committee chair Prospero Pichay expressed concern over reports that the US government, through its embassy in Manila, had been exerting pressure on the Philippine government to give in to the demands of AT&T and MCI Worldcom Inc.

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SPAV law unclear on perks

By Elena R. Torrijos

BANK of the Philippine Islands is seeking clarification from regulators on whether properties acquired through mergers could be considered as assets qualified for tax perks under the special purpose vehicle law.

"It's something that we believe should be ruled on," BPI senior vice president Senen Matoto said in an interview.

Matoto said including properties acquired as a result of mergers would prod more lenders to dispose of their nonperforming assets.

Under the chart of accounts of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Ropoas were defined as assets acquired as a consequence of foreclosures or for other reasons.

However, in the SPV implementing rules drafted by the Securities and Exchange Commission, BSP and Department of Finance, Ropoas refer to properties owned or acquired by a financial institution in settling loans.

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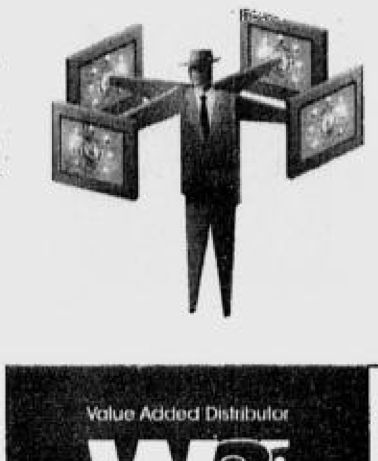

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 24, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Banks					
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	16	16	15.75	15.75	20,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	32.5	32.5	32	32.5	291,200
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	24.25	24.25	24	24	61,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27	26	27	91,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.25	7,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc..	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1,350,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	30,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1295	1310	1295	1310	3,590
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc..	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	945	975	945	970	2,400
COMMUNICATION					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	3,810,000
Globe Telecom Inc..	530	535	530	530	27,500
ISM Communications Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	700,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	2.85	3.2	2.85	3.05	112,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	190,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	290	290	282.5	282.5	17,060
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.4	304,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.25	663,300
Petron Corp.	1.64	1.66	1.64	1.66	503,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	300,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.34	50,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	4,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	15.75	15.75	15.5	15.5	12,700
La Tondena Distillers,Inc	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.5	1,000
RFM Corp.	.6900	.69	0.69	0.69	90,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58	58	57.5	58	423,500
San Miguel Corp. B	66	66.5	65.5	65.5	257,300
Universal Robina Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	11,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	200,000
Ayala Corp.	4.20	4.2	4.15	4.15	1,022,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	1,665,000
Alliance Global Group Inc	11	11	10.75	11	800
A. Soriano Corp.	.6000	.6	.6	.6	200,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	1,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc..	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	5,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	81,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.115	0.12	0.115	0.12	1,260,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	100,000
Crown Equities Inc..	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	110,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	200,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	140,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	586,000
Macroasia Corp.	.4500	.45	0.45	0.45	240,000
Megaworld Corp.	.5800	.58	.58	.58	1,150,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.135	0.15	0.135	0.135	1,650,000
Music Corp.	.1750	.175	.17	.175	920,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	30,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
SPI Technologies Inc..	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.5	46,500
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	.2800	.28	0.28	0.28	550,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	350,000
Manila Jockey Club	7	7	7	7	12,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	12	12	12	12	300,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.- Pref.	775	775	775	775	50
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Cc	10	10	10	10	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.65	4.75	4.6	4.75	1,871,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	24,880,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.86	0.86	540,000
SM Development Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	27,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	1,278,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	1,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.215	2,440,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0026	0.0026	0.0024	0.0024	7,000,000
Omico Corp.	.0020	.002	.002	.002	20,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	700,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	3,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,960,490	21,894,475.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	19,498,710	92,273,090.00
PRO	28,646,000	18,662,920.00
Mining	31,240,000	798,700.00
OIL	6,000,000	12,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	87,345,200	133,641,185.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	343.15	UP 0.73
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,474.93	DOWN 5.83
PRO	439.51	UP 1.04
Mining	1,180.68	DOWN 11.60
OIL	1.04	UP 0.03
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	640.34	UP 5.49
Composite	1,013.93	DOWN 1.77

NO. OF ADVANCES: 16, NO. OF DECLINES: 22, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 36, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 74, NO. OF TRADES: 830

Gov't seen scrapping foreign-funded projects

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MACAPAGAL administration is considering scrapping some of or even all the foreign-assisted projects worth P44 billion scheduled for implementation this year due to lack of counterpart funding in the light of the government's budget constraints.

A finance official said the only problem with canceling all foreign-assisted projects calendared for this year was that the government might have to breach agreements already forged with multilateral creditors and donors.

Sen. Manuel Villar recently proposed what he called a "survival" budget bill that sought for an allocation of only P804.04 billion, or lower than the P804.2 billion proposed by Malacañang.

Foreign-assisted projects or FAPs are project and program loans which are estimated to amount to P44 billion this year. In 2002, project loans reached P26.309 billion while program loans stood at P24.756 billion.

Projects undertaken with foreign assistance or ODA require counterpart funding from the government equivalent to about 30 percent of the total project cost. A finance official said the government had set aside "a very small budget for counterpart funding this year."

Scrapping ODA-funded projects will mean canceling major infrastructure items that may be crucial to economic growth.

RP sets terms for joining Asean-China cooperation

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES will only participate in the early harvest program under the Asean-China Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation if this will yield a bumper crop for exporters of Philippine agriculture and manufactured goods in China.

This was revealed by Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II ahead of Friday's meeting of the Cabinet-level Tariff and Related Matters Committee, which would decide on the Philippines' participation in the early harvest program.

The TRM's technical working group earlier proposed to either reject outright the country's taking part in the early harvest program or seek an extension for the March 1 deadline to submit the country's list of goods for inclusion in the early harvest program.

Roxas said China's insistence on limiting the early harvest mainly to chapters 1 to 8 of the country's tariff program that covered agricultural products, specifically vegetables, would mean huge trade losses for the country.

"We are clearly not competitive in these areas and if we are forced to open up these markets, our economy would be ruined," Roxas said.

The early harvest program was originally envisioned to provide the Philippines and other Asean members with a first crack at the Mainland's markets.

China agreed to lower duties on select goods at parity with Asean levels for three years ahead of the implementation of a single Asean-China market.

Meralco, Napocor...

From page B1

Meralco should buy at least 3,600 megawatts each month from Napocor.

Meralco officials insisted that the contract also provided that the minimum offtake could be lowered in times of an economic downturn.

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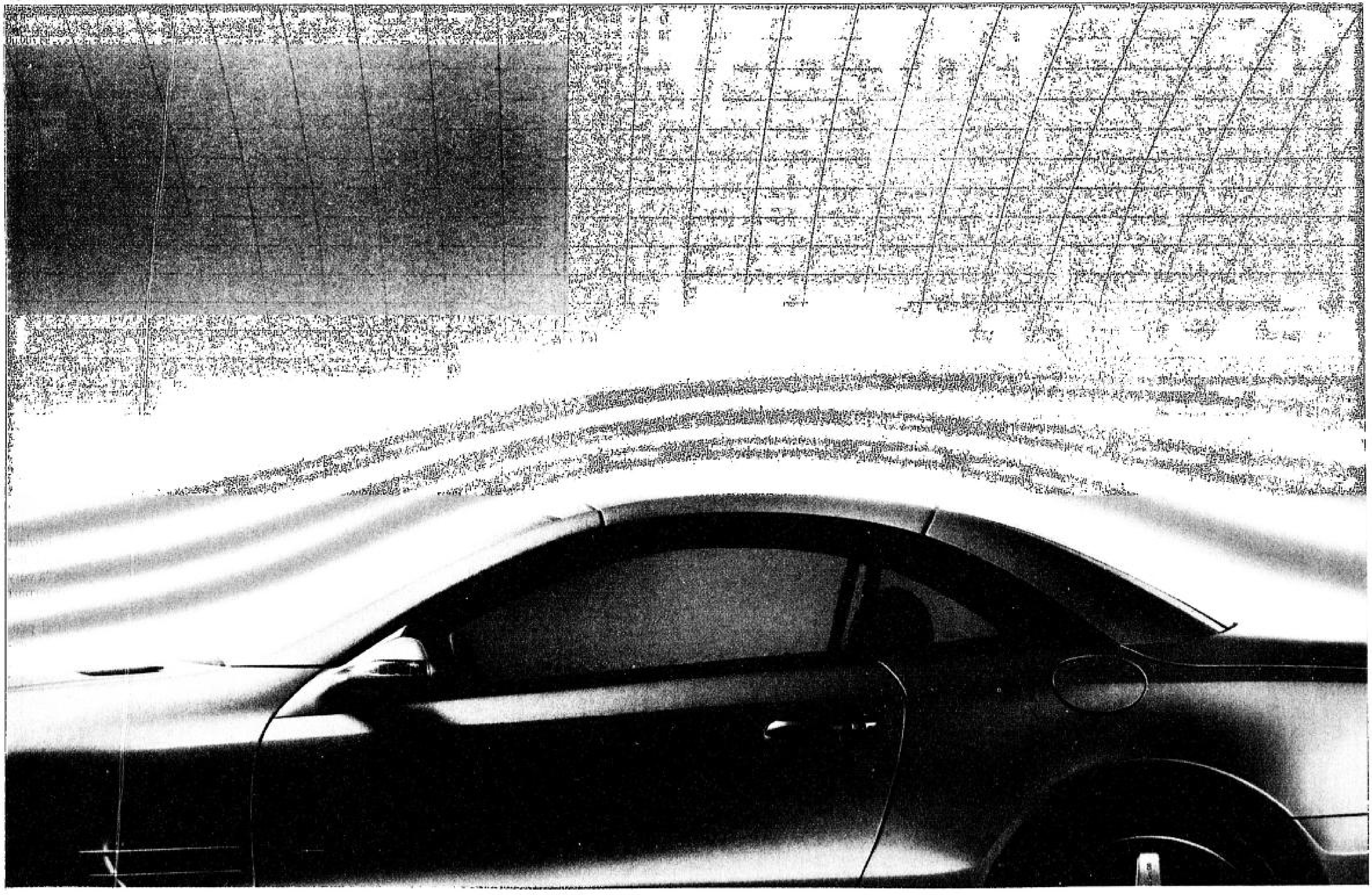

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Smart in full bloom in Baguio's Flower Festival 2003

BAGUIO. Cool breezes, juicy strawberries, peanut brittle. In February, the image of the "Summer Capital of the Philippines" that always comes to mind turns more festive, and floral. The Baguio Flower Festival-Panagbenga 2003-is known throughout the country as one of the biggest and most popular festivals in the Philippines. Annually, it draws huge crowds from all over the region, even drawing visitors from other countries due to the beauty and splendor of the event.

In the tradition of supporting regional festivals such as Kadayawan in Davao, Masskara in Bacolod, and Sinulog in Cebu, Smart Communications now throws its full support behind the Baguio Flower Festival in 2003.

The Baguio Flower Festival-Panagbenga 2003 is actually comprised of several activities throughout February. These range from a fluvial parade, various contingents parading on the main streets of Baguio, al fresco dining at various food and beverage establishments lining Session Road, as well as various street parties across the city. The highlight of this festival is the grand parade around the entire city. Thematic floats made from fresh flowers are joined by colorful tribes bringing laughter and cheer to every corner of the City of Pines.

Smart remains the choice of the people, even as from as far north as Baguio. With unmatched network of coverage and quality, reasonable IDD rates, and extensive distribution channels allowing Smart subscribers to easily avail themselves of Smart's services, Baguio remains a vital part of Smart Country. Among the pine trees and the blooming flowers throughout the region and across the nation, only one name stands above them all: Smart.

Watch out for these special Smart events. Great offers and privileges await Smart subscribers and SIM swappers. Visit the Smartbooth onsite for more details.

Feb. 14 to March 2 (Baguio Country Club): Free drinks to Smart subscribers upon checking in (Feb. 28 to March 2). Special Gold Offer from Feb. 28 to March 3.

Feb. 14 to March 2 (Ball Field Camp John Hay): Country Fair at the Ball field where there will be food stalls, Narda's Café, Organic Farm Café and selected retail outlets and arts and crafts.

Feb. 28 (Legarda Road): In cooperation with RMN, Smart will be hosting a street party featuring First Circle. Gift packs will be offered for raffle.

Feb. 1 to March 2 (Cactus Bar along Legarda Road): There will be live bands from Manila performing nightly: Foreplay Band, Sound Diversion, Bump N Grind, Flights of Fancy, and Nocturnal.

Feb. 1 to March 2 (Pilgrim's Café, Session Road): In celebration of Valentine's Day and Flower Festival, it will be having a musical concert titled "Hearts for Peace II"

Feb. 25 to March 2 (Gimbals Music Lounge, Legarda Road): There will be live bands from Manila performing nightly: Feb. 26-6 Days to Friday, Feb. 27-Brown Flava and Revized, Feb. 28-Revelation, Revized and Chillworx, March 1-Revelation, Brown Flava, Chillworx, March 2-Revized.

Feb. 25 to March 2 (18B.C. Bar, Legarda Road) In time with the fiesta, 18B.C. will be having a special show featuring Limited Edition from Manila on March 1.

Feb. 1 to March 2 (Padi's Point, Otek Street, near Rizal Park): There will be live bands from Manila performing nightly.

GIFTED
5th Annual Convention
The Challenge of Unfulfilled Potential: The Underachieving Gifted.

PAG CELEBRATES WEEK OF GIFTED
The Philippine Association for the Gifted recently held its 5th annual convention titled 'The Challenge of Unfulfilled Potential: The Underachieving Gifted' in celebration of the National Week of the Gifted. Well-known expert on the underachieving gifted child professor Den Mo Tsai PhD (5th from left) spoke on the topic to teachers, parents, psychiatrists, and child-care workers.

Mavericks reveal 'Fantastically Fresh' ideas

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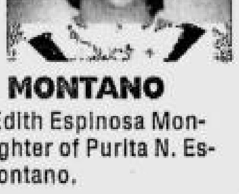

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Moros relaunch website

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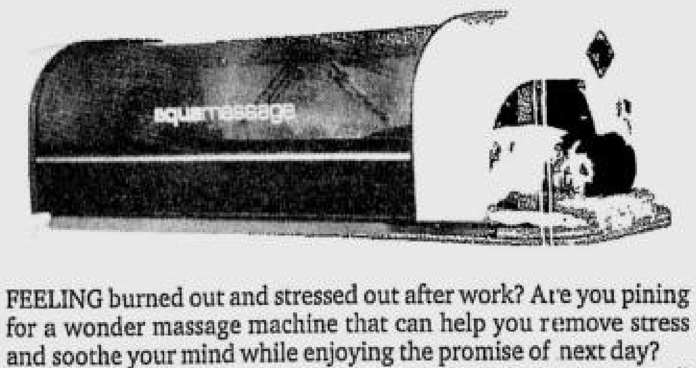
ProductFILES

The complete, instant massage



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E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph

People, Events & Products

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Smart in full bloom in Baguio's Flower Festival 2003

BAGUIO. Cool breezes, juicy strawberries, peanut brittle. In February, the image of the "Summer Capital of the Philippines" that always comes to mind turns more festive, and floral. The Baguio Flower Festival-Panagbenga 2003-is known throughout the country as one of the biggest and most popular festivals in the Philippines. Annually, it draws huge crowds from all over the region, even drawing visitors from other countries due to the beauty and splendor of the event.

In the tradition of supporting regional festivals such as Kadayawan in Davao, Masskara in Bacolod, and Sinulog in Cebu, Smart Communications now throws its full support behind the Baguio Flower Festival in 2003.

The Baguio Flower Festival-Panagbenga 2003 is actually comprised of several activities throughout February. These range from a fluvial parade, various contingents parading on the main streets of Baguio, al fresco dining at various food and beverage establishments lining Session Road, as well as various street parties across the city. The highlight of this festival is the grand parade around the entire city. Thematic floats made from fresh flowers are joined by colorful tribes bringing laughter and cheer to every corner of the City of Pines.

Smart remains the choice of the people, even as from as far north as Baguio. With unmatched network of coverage and quality, reasonable IDD rates, and extensive distribution channels allowing Smart subscribers to easily avail themselves of Smart's services, Baguio remains a vital part of Smart Country. Among the pine trees and the blooming flowers throughout the region and across the nation, only one name stands above them all: Smart.

Watch out for these special Smart events. Great offers and privileges await Smart subscribers and SIM swappers. Visit the Smartbooth onsite for more details.

Feb. 14 to March 2 (Baguio Country Club): Free drinks to Smart subscribers upon checking in (Feb. 28 to March 2). Special Gold Offer from Feb. 28 to March 3.

Feb. 14 to March 2 (Ball Field Camp John Hay): Country Fair at the Ball field where there will be food stalls, Narda's Café, Organic Farm Café and selected retail outlets and arts and crafts.

Feb. 28 (Legarda Road): In cooperation with RMN, Smart will be hosting a street party featuring First Circle. Gift packs will be offered for raffle.

Feb. 1 to March 2 (Cactus Bar along Legarda Road): There will be live bands from Manila performing nightly: Foreplay Band, Sound Diversion, Bump N Grind, Flights of Fancy, and Nocturnal.

Feb. 1 to March 2 (Pilgrim's Café, Session Road): In celebration of Valentine's Day and Flower Festival, it will be having a musical concert titled "Hearts for Peace II"

Feb. 25 to March 2 (Gimbals Music Lounge, Legarda Road): There will be live bands from Manila performing nightly: Feb. 26-6 Days to Friday, Feb. 27-Brown Flava and Revized, Feb. 28-Revelation, Revized and Chillworx, March 1-Revelation, Brown Flava, Chillworx, March 2-Revized.

Feb. 25 to March 2 (18B.C. Bar, Legarda Road) In time with the fiesta, 18B.C. will be having a special show featuring Limited Edition from Manila on March 1.

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GIFTED
5th Annual Convention
The Challenge of Unfulfilled Potential: The Underachieving Gifted.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PLDT play, part 2

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

WITH Fort Bonifacio having been disposed of, the First Pacific headquarters in Hong Kong is now ready to implement Part 2 of its stalled disengagement from the Philippines, the sale of its PLDT holdings.

And to prevent a repeat of a Gokongwei-like blockade last year, First Pacific, according to the grapevine, would first have to recall its chairman, PLDT president Manuel V. Pangilinan, back to Hong Kong and he would be given non-Philippine responsibilities, over apparently MVP's continuing objections.

First Pacific is apparently preparing a new set of nominees come June's annual stockholders meeting of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., a more compliant board that would approve the transfer of First Pacific's controlling PLDT stake to, most likely, Telekom Malaysia.

Telekom Malaysia, which is being hammered in its home front with its belated foray into the lucrative cellular phone business, is incidentally already a partner of Smart's regional satellite service.

Both the chair of Telekom Malaysia and First Pacific denied a Monday item here saying that the Salims, the Indonesian principals of First Pacific, have already reached an advanced state of negotiations for the sale of First Pacific's PLDT holdings to Malaysia's largest landline provider.

Interestingly, the twin denials were solicited by the press, and not furnished the regulatory authorities as the scrupulous First Pacific had usually done in the past.

Meanwhile, not wanting to be left as an insignificant minority shareholder, PLDT chair Antonio "TonyBoy" Cojuangco has already struck a deal with the Salims, according to one account, to jointly dispose of the First Pacific bloc in PLDT along with the Cojuangcos'.

Hmmm. If that were correct, where would that leave the Yuchengcos?

In any case, the situation should become clearer on March 12, when First Pacific holds its quarterly board meeting.

Belgian waffle

IT must have been a letdown, coming straight from New York's Park Avenue, to be plunked down in a Third World dump like Manila.

So new Belgian Ambassador Christiane Tanghe and his wife immediately took a dislike at their official residence in Dasmariñas Village upon their arrival in September, making known their intention to move to a newer house, preferably in the more upscale North Forbes Park.

Unfortunately, Tanghe's predecessor had renewed a two-year lease on the Dasmariñas property in January 2002, with the usual maintenance work, repairs and repainting having passed the Belgian embassy's muster or at least the previous occupant's.

The house, incidentally, was built two decades ago specifically for the Belgian ambassador's use.

To make a long story short, the Belgian embassy now refuses to advance the stipulated whole year 2003 lease of $90,000—technically the ambassador has been staying rent-free for two months now—and has even hired the ACCRA law firm to pre-terminate the lease effective end-March, for the alleged failure of the lessor to institute a new list of repairs.

The Dasma homeowner, broadcaster Alfredo "Atom" Henares, is naturally balking, especially since he acquired the house only in September after paying P68.9 million for the 1,775-square-meter property to the previous homeowners, the heirs of Eduardo Santiago.

In any case, the Belgian embassy, according to Henares, would have to pay the penalty if it wanted to pre-terminate, a remote possibility, judging from the tone of the ACCRA letter.

To protect himself, Henares has hired the Belo law firm to prepare a civil complaint should amicable talks fail.

Babes in the woods

DESPITE remaining a good friend of Joseph Estrada to this day, advertising/PR executive "Babes" Romualdez was, contrary to a Monday item in Cocktales, never part of the Malacañang-inspired advertising boycott of the INQUIRER during Erap's heyday, according to a statement issued by BSMG and FCB, the twin agencies chaired by Romualdez.

Heard through the grapevine

AN international consortium led by our very own International Container Terminal Services Inc. has won the privatization bidding for Gydinia, Poland's and incidentally Eastern Europe's biggest container port.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

RP commits to import rice from Thailand

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES will import a minimum of 200,000 metric tons of rice yearly from Thailand in exchange for its support to the country's decision to maintain high tariff walls on sugar. Thailand is the biggest sugar exporter in Asia.

"That is what they asked and that is what we (the Department of Trade and Industry) have recommended to the President," said Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II.

Roxas said Malacañang has ordered the Department of Agriculture and National Food Authority to implement the deal with Thailand which would cover roughly 20 percent of the country's rice imports next year projected at 1 million tons. Roxas said the Thai rice would be bought at world market prices and that the commitment it would be enforced for less than five years.

Roxas said the fixed allocation of 200,000 metric tons a year represented what the country would have imported anyway from Thailand. The rice import deal is meant to compensate Thailand which would incur potential trade losses from the Philippines' decision to move sugar into the sensitive list of agriculture products and defer the reduction to 5 percent of the duty on sugar, from the current range of 50 percent to 65 percent, under the Asean Free Trade Area starting this year.

"If we did not change our policy on sugar, Thailand's farmers would have been able to sell more sugar here at 5-percent tariff because they are more efficient than us," Roxas said.

Roxas said getting Thailand's support was crucial not only in the Afta Council (where tariff delays in the regional trading block are approved) but also in retaining the high tariff walls on sugar imports from non-Asean countries.

Being a principal supplier of sugar, Roxas said getting Thailand's support in Geneva would help the country's petition in the World Trade Organization to increase the bound rate or the maximum level of duty on sugar from 65 percent to 85 percent. (The Philippines grants a special 50-percent duty on sugar brought in under the minimum access volume program).

By raising the bound rate, Roxas said the Philippines did not have to reduce the tariff on sugar to a maximum of 50 percent by next year. It will, instead, keep sugar tariffs at the current 65 percent up to 2010, he added.

The deal is expected to give Thailand, which will still be allowed to bid for more contracts on top of its yearly allotment, a leg up over the country's other rice suppliers—India, China, Thailand and Vietnam.

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RESORT
Lake Caliraya, Cavinti, Laguna

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MINIMUM OF 15 PERSONS, OVERNIGHT STAY

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No Service Charge

PROMO EXTENDED UNTIL March 31, 2003

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Important:

* Annual rate of return for the year ending December 27, 2002. It includes changes in share value and reinvestment of distributions and do not take into account any sales, redemption, or optional charges payable by any shareholder which would have reduced returns.

* Historical returns do not indicate future returns. They may indicate how well a fund was managed to optimize return on investments during a given period.

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Maligayang Pagbabalik!

His Highness

Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa

Prime Minister, Kingdom of Bahrain

On His Highness The Prime Minister's Personal Visit to AMA Computer University
February 25 – March 1, 2003

Dr. and Mrs. Amable R. Aguiluz V and family, together with the Board of Trustees of AMA COMPUTER UNIVERSITY welcome once again His Highness SHAIKH KHALIFA BIN SALMAN AL-KHALIFA to the Philippines.

His personal visit to the AMA COMPUTER UNIVERSITY is a solid testament to his enduring friendship with Dr. Amable R. Aguiluz V. It serves to strengthen their mutual commitment to establish better IT education for our peoples and for the world.

H.H. The Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa flanked by Mr. Amable C. Aguiluz IX and Dr. Amable R. Aguiluz V, President and Chairman of AMA Education System respectively, together with members of The Prime Minister's Court during ceremonies inaugurating the AMA International University BAHRAIN on September 29, 2002.

This strong friendship between His Highness The Prime Minister, Father to the more than 40,000 Filipinos in the Kingdom, and Dr. Amable R. Aguiluz V, Father of Computer Education in the Philippines, has led to the establishment of the AMA International University BAHRAIN, the first Asian IT University in the Gulf Region, bringing IT-based degree education to the entire Middle East.

Plans are also under way to establish the AMA Medical School and Medical Center in collaboration with Harvard Medical International (Boston, USA) in the 5-hectare campus of AMA International University BAHRAIN in Manama, a gracious gift of His Highness The Prime Minister, to serve the needs of both Bahrainis and Filipinos in the region.

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PEOPLE at WORK

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo** ● *Subsection Editor* **Regina Galang Reyes**

BREAKFAST CHAT

Charisma is a leader's magnet for success

By Ricky B. Garcia

WHEN a leader wants to achieve spectacular results with people, personal charisma can be a magnet for success.

In the recent People at Work segment on Studio 23's Breakfast program, Doodz Policarpio, president of Dale Carnegie Executive Training Institute of the Philippines, talked about how one can develop a personal magnetism for successful leadership. Here's the gist of the interview.

PaW: What does it take to have an irresistible magnetism?

Policarpio: Now that is a tricky question. One is led to think that magnetism is something you can program or buy in a drugstore. The truth is magnetism is something developed unconsciously over long periods of time by doing the right things in the way of understanding people and their needs, wants, desires and cravings. It's being able to be the person for them.

PaW: How then can we develop magnetism?

Policarpio: Be who you are. The person we all ought to be is an integrated whole made up of little values that build a character that makes you glow in the dark.

PaW: What are the common characteristics of charismatic people?

Policarpio: What do JFK, Gandhi, Napoleon, McArthur, Elvis Presley, John Lennon and Churchill have in common? One is the way they touch the hearts of other people they come in contact with. The way they say and do things that communicate a people-first message. In other words, I see people skills, human relations skills. They always see an opportunity to throw down a challenge and appeal to nobler motives. It's the way they show genuine and sincere appreciation and make people feel important. William James, a modern day American philosopher, said the greatest craving of man is to be accepted, to be loved. He said craving, not want.

PaW: How can we unleash untapped magnetism?

Policarpio: Practice. Like everything else, it needs practice. Practicing the right attitude, knowing the fundamentals, practicing the right habits with the right coaching, until it becomes second nature to them.

PaW: How can we create a powerful impact on everyone we meet?

Policarpio: Well, like I've always mentioned: the only way to impress people is to be impressed by them. Dale Carnegie wrote in his book, "How to win friends and influence people," that one should become genuinely interested in people, know their names, and talk in terms of their interests.

PaW: How else can we increase our personal charm and magnetism?

Policarpio: Antoine de San Exupery, author of The Little Prince, once said, "It is only when one sees through the heart that he can truly see." See with your heart. Grow each day with genuine love for people. The ancient Hindus would always say; if a man speaks with pure thought, happiness follows him like a shadow. Read books like "How to win friends and influence people" by Dale Carnegie and "The power of positive thinking" by Norman Vincent Peale. Practice the principles of good human relations. Attend the Dale Carnegie courses. It has been said by thousands of successful Dale graduates: You don't just take a Dale Carnegie course. You live it.

(Watch the People at Work segment every Tuesday at 7 a.m. on Studio 23's Breakfast, which airs from Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. For suggestions and queries, email optima@edsamail.com.ph.*)*

DOODZ Policarpio, president of Dale Carnegie Executive Institue of the Phils. and Celine Madamba, corporate relations manager of INQUIRER PHOTO BY R. GARCIA

Options for 'retrenchies' are plenty

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice

FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I AM a follower of your articles since I was still a full-time employee. Presently, I am out of a job because of the business reorganization in my former company. Your column in the Nov. 27, 2002 issue of the INQUIRER was very informative. Like the writer of the letter "Too Old," I am also now 43 years old.

As a result of reading a lot of materials, I equipped myself with other skills and knowledge while I was still working full time. Thus, while my formal job title was in the production area, I also trained on the safety, quality and environmental aspects of my work. I think these are among my strengths now. However, since I did not know that the redundancy program would affect me so soon, I was not rea lly prepared when I lost my job.

Would you know of another group who can help us "retrenchies" or unwilling retirees professionally weigh or evaluate our options? I have searched through the Internet and I cannot seem to find one. It is different when you just read about these things. I have read many articles on this topic in the Internet as well as in books. Perhaps, the Ancilla group can add this to your services. I know that there are a lot of those who have recently lost their jobs who might want these services, as these may not be provided by their former employers.

Also, you mentioned about consultancy and training as options for us who have reached a certain level of experience and maturity. Again, I was looking for a group or agency that can help me start out along these lines, but it seems there is none in the Philippines. Would you know of any group? I am willing to invest part of my precious retirement money to do this professionally, but I cannot find a group that can help me. Courses in the Technology and Livelihood Center of the government do not include how to start a consultancy business, where you have to sell your knowledge and not flowers or candles. Thank you for your time. I hope you can help me find answers to my questions.

Unwilling Retiree

In today's complex, dynamic and global environment, change is becoming the rule of the game rather than the exception. You are right to anticipate change by increasing your knowledge in other related areas. In response to your concerns, opportunities exist for experienced people like you to pursue a consulting or training career. Our company, Ancilla, offers career counseling and can help you in this area.

Career counseling

Typically, we do career counseling as part of our Change and Care package for companies who desire to help their employees through emotional and practical difficulties encountered during downsizing, mergers or acquisitions. We can also do career counseling for individuals who desire to find out what they want to do in the next stage of their career lives. We help them through a number of personality, interest and skill assessments to find out what work would suit them best. Then, we help them explore the options they can pursue: whether looking for work in the same field, using their skills in a different field, or becoming an entrepreneur. We also help them compose an updated resume and coach them for successful job interviews. This we can do for you for a reasonable fee.

Expansion

If you will send me your resume via e-mail, we can check whether you would be qualified to join our company to do either training or consultancy work. In fact, three of our current consultants, applied with us after reading the column. If you have the technical competencies we desire and values compatible to our corporate culture, then we can help you gain training and consulting skills. Our consultancy covers enterprise development, meaning facilitating effectiveness in strategy management and key functional areas as well as organization and human resource development. In 2003, we anticipate expansion of our business. We would be happy to welcome ten additional qualified consultants.

In closing, let me assure you that you are never too old at 43 to pursue another career. What is important is one's ability to learn and adapt to new challenges. Take care and God bless.

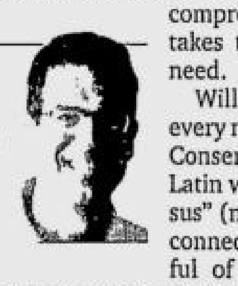
THANK YOU, GOODBYE!
VALUED EMPLOYEE
IN
ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE BRAVO

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail to ancillaedc@ pacific.net.ph or fax to 892-2902.*)*

How to survive on a committee

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner



DEAR WW: Recently my boss asked me to sit on a new committee. I work in a warehouse and have never done anything like this before. Any tips?

New To The Meet Market

There's a tree house at the end of my block. It's a regular architectural masterpiece, with gables, shutters and a shingled roof, all suspended between five trees. Or I guess I should say it was a masterpiece, because during a windstorm, the wind pulled the trees in opposite directions and the house came crashing to the ground.

Sort of reminded me of the last committee meeting I attended. Everyone was blowing in different directions, and then there was a loud crash and debris everywhere. Unfortunately, that's not unusual. Lots of committee meetings go that route because the leader and the members haven't clarified how the committee's decisions will be made. People go into the meetings with different expectations, then crash when it's time to come to a resolution.

You can help minimize that problem by asking the committee leader how decisions will be made. Simply asking the question may prompt her to discuss this with the other members so everyone's expectations are in sync. Knowing the decision making process will also let you play your cards (and your boss's) most effectively. The following questions can help. They were developed at Intel and were included in an article in Fast Company entitled

"The Seven Sins of Deadly Meetings" (available online at http://www.fastcompany.com).

Will all decisions be made by the committee leader, regardless of members' input? If so, pay attention during the meetings in case there's some useful information, but don't hustle to get your points across. You'll be talking to a wall.

Will the leader make the decisions using members' input? If so, advocate strongly for your position. Think of yourself as a consultant to the leader: make a case that will be hard to resist.

Will committee members vote on major decisions? If so, your task is to influence your fellow members. If necessary, horse trade, compromise; do what it takes to get the votes you need.

Will a decision require every member's agreement? Consensus comes from the Latin words "con" and "census" (meaning "you've been conned if you think a roomful of our employees can agree on anything"). Consequently, it's not often called for in corporate committees. But if your committee requires consensus, your game plan should be this: look for the elements you know everyone can agree to and tie key parts of your agenda to those. Hopefully, people will agree to your items in order to get the other things they want.

Knowing how decisions will be made will make you a far more effective committee member. It will also streamline your committee meetings. I guess the moral of this story is: tree houses are for birds-and so are meetings with undefined rules about how decisions will be reached.

(Mr. Rosner is the author of "The Boss's Survival Guide," McGraw Hill 2001, and "Working Wounded," Warner 2000, a speaker and founder of the award-winning Working Wounded.com & RetentionEvangelist.com. He is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. Email him at bob@workingwounded.com.*)*

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MANIFESTO "OPEN SKIES" FOR DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

We, the constituents of Central and Northern Luzon, strongly urge President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to declare an "open skies" policy for the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA).

The time has come for the DMIA to serve as catalyst for the economic growth and development of our regions. An "open skies" policy is a strategy that will transform Clark into an aerotropolis, an aviation-led economy. It will stimulate greater trade and tourism activities, create jobs, generate income and improve living conditions.

DMIA is a strategic airport and gateway for the 4 million Filipinos residing in North America 70% of which originally hail from Regions I, II, III and the Cordilleras. It is likewise in close proximity to the three million overseas Filipino workers, 35% of which originate from Northern and Central Luzon. Furthermore, DMIA can be a potential hub for emerging markets from Asia and for prospective transit passengers. Direct flights into Clark will save passengers time and money.

The world is moving beyond the protectionist and restrictive aviation policies as economies become more integrated with each other. Fifty-seven countries have already signed bilateral "open skies" agreements with the Unites States.

Asian countries have also opened up their skies to support the development of Asia as a single manufacturing facility for the rest of the world. Under the bilateral "open skies" between Thailand and Taiwan, Taiwanese carriers are no longer restricted in carrying traffic from Taipei to Bangkok and beyond to Europe. The experience of Bali in Indonesia likewise clearly demonstrates that declaring Denpasar Airport an open port for all airlines generates demand for tourism and provides the least costly infrastructure to support tourism development.

The declaration of open skies for DMIA needs to appropriate policy directive from the president to be effective. The following are the core elements for this:

- Flights landing in DMIA will not be counted as among the existing entitlements of the respective operating carrier;
- All requests for passenger and cargo flights be granted for as long as they comply with the laws and regulations of the Philippines, including safety standards and consistency with international aviation and travel convention;
- DMIA will be granted with the authority to negotiate for their own air rights;
- Prices will be market determined.

We deeply hope that Your Excellency will consider our petition and act swiftly to declare "open skies" in DMIA at Clark.

Republic of the Philippines
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
INTER-AGENCY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS)** invites G-EPS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF FLYING SUIT for the PHILIPPINE FORCE.**

The approved budget for this contract is **P18,225,500.00.**

All interested parties are invited to attend the **Pre-Bid Conference** that will be held **on March 4, 2003, 9:30 A.M.** at the **PS Conference Room, 2nd Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St., Paco, Manila.**

The bid documents shall be available at the **PS-PURCHASING DIVISION** starting **February 19, 2003** upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Pesos (Php2,000.00).**

The bidders shall submit their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the IABAC Secretariat at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on **March 20, 2003 at 9:30 A.M.**

For more information, please call the **PS-Purchasing Division** at telephone nos. **563-94-02 or 563-93-74.**

PS reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PS further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO P. OPIDA**
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI–Feb. 19 & 26, 2003)

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
PNOC Telephone 8931320 loc 5115 Fax 840-1461

RE-INVITATION TO BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested accredited or prequalified contractors to submit sealed bids for the project.

ANNUAL CONTRACT FOR VOYAGE CHARTER of TRAMPING VESSEL
EDC 02-243-1

Bid documents may be secured from the Contracts Administration Group (c/o I.M. CORCUERA) starting **February 26, 2003.**

For purposes of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **March 10, 2003, 10:00 a.m.** at the above address.

Sealed bids in two (2) sets shall be received by the Contracts Administration Group at the above address not later than **2:00 p.m.** on **March 27, 2003**, and then publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(Sgd.) **SERGIO A.F. APOSTOL**
Chairman & President/CEO

(PDI – Feb. 26, 2003)

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JOB MARKET

Republic of the Philippines
National Historical Institute
T.M. Kalaw, Ermita, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Historical Institute (NHI) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

Project No. 1

DESCRIPTION **Provision of Security Services**
LOCATIONS : 1. NHI Main Office, T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila
2. Quezon Memorial Shrine, Elliptical Road, Quezon City
3. Pinaglabanan Memorial Shrine, San Juan, Metro Manila
4. Rizal Shrine, Fort Santiago, Intramuros, Manila
5. Rizal Shrine, Calamba, Laguna
6. Rizal Shrine, Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte

APPROVED BUDGET : P2,835,501.12
CONTRACT DURATION : **April 01, 2003 to December 31, 2003**

Project No. 2

DESCRIPTION **Provision of Janitorial Services**
LOCATIONS : 1. NHI Main Office, T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila
2. Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine, Kawit, Cavite

APPROVED BUDGET : P1,013,440.50
CONTRACT DURATION : **April 01, 2003 to December 31, 2003**

Interested parties are advised to submit Letter of Intent and photocopy of their Certificate of Registration of Business Name (with original for authentication) not later than 5:00 P.M. of **February 28, 2003.**

Eligibility Statements Form shall be issued from February 21-28, 2003. Duly accomplished Eligibility Statements shall be placed in a sealed envelope and shall be submitted to the Chairman, NHI-BAC, National Historical Institute, T.M. Kalaw, Ermita, Manila on **March 6-7, 2003.**

Bid documents will be made available only to eligible bidders for issuance at the BAC Secretariat, NHI Annex, T.M. Kalaw, Ermita, Manila upon presentation of the original Certificate of Eligibility.

Bid proposals shall be submitted in two (2) sealed brown envelopes with the name of the project to be bid and the name of the bidder in capital letters, addressed to the BAC Chairman of the NHI, T.M. Kalaw Street, Ermita, Manila. The "First Envelope" shall contain the accomplished Technical Statements. The "Second Envelope" shall contain the financial proposal.

Submission and Opening of Bids is on **March 24, 2003 at 9:00 A.M.**

All particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of Executive Order No. 40, as approved October 8, 2001 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids/eligibility statements; to declare a failure of bidding if there is, among others, reason to suspect an evident collusion among bidders resulting in no competition; to waive any required formality in the bids received; and to accept the bid most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **EMELITA V. ALMOSARA, CESO IV**
Deputy Executive Director III
and BAC Chairman

(PDI – February 26, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

Interested parties are invited to prequalify and bid for the selection of the University's strategic partner in the planning, development and management under a long-term lease agreement of Phase I, a 37.5-hectare component of the 98.5-hectare

University of the Philippines North S&T Park.

The UP Science and Technology (S&T) Park (North and South sectors) is envisioned to promote synergy between the academe and industry in Research and Development (R&D) collaboration in high-technology fields (e.g. IT, Biotechnology, Education Technology, Energy Systems, etc.). The entire UP S&T Park occupies a total aggregate area of 163.5 hectares located in two non-contiguous sites in the UP Diliman Campus, Quezon City; the UP North S&T Park (98.5-hectare property along Commonwealth Avenue), and the UP South S&T Park (65-hectare property along C. P. Garcia Avenue).

The UP S&T Park offers access to the University's academic resources, IT infrastructure, support services, and many other unique location advantages, such as: research-active PhD faculty, specialized research and training laboratories, specialized libraries in different fields, computing facilities, fiber-optic network, training rooms and facilities: short- and long-term accommodation facilities; and sports, shopping and community amenities.

Prequalification forms and Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained from the UP North S&T Park Secretariat, Director's Office, 4/F ISSI Bldg./Virata Hall, UP Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of P2,000.00 from March 3 to March 7, 2003. Deadline of submission of duly accomplished prequalification documents will be on March 14, 2003. After the evaluation of the documents submitted, the prequalified developers shall be duly notified of the schedule of subsequent activities. For inquiries, please call Tel. No. 920-5301 to 99 loc. 4717; or Tel. No. 92[illegible]6923, 927-9238; Fax 927-1034 (c/o Ms. Ludy Cubillas); e-mail: *lourd[illegible].cubillas@up.edu.ph*

(Sgd.) **RAFAEL A. RODRIGUEZ**
Vice-President for Development

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HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
MATRIMONIAL CAUSES NO. 163 OF 2003

BETWEEN
ROSEMARIE JAMES Petitioner
and
ELSON RAMONES Respondent

BEFORE HIS HONOUR JUDGE GILL OF DISTRICT COURT IN CHAMBERS

ORDER

UPON the application of the Petitioner and upon reading the Affirmation of Ramones Rosemarie James filed herein on 14th of January 2003, IT IS ORDERED that service of the Divorce Petition herein dated 6th January 2003 and all relevant documents on the respondent be substituted by:

1. Inserting an advertisement once in Philippines Inquirer, a Philippine Newspaper published and widely circulating in Philippines and the Notice to be settled by Registrar; and
2. sending the same by prepaid ordinary post to the address of the Respondent's parents, namely, Brgy. 20, Vintar Ilocos Norte, Philippines.

Dated this 20th day of January 2003.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE
HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
MATRIMONIAL CAUSES NO. 163 OF 2003

BETWEEN
ROSEMARIE JAMES Petitioner
and
ELSON RAMONES Respondent

NOTICE

A Petition for Divorce has been filed against Elson Ramones, who may apply to Family Court Registry at M2 Floor, Wanchai Law Courts, Wanchai Tower, No. 12 Harbour Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong for a copy of Petition.

If within one month he has not communicated with the Family Court Registry, the Court may hear the case in his absence.

Registrar

(PDI – Feb. 26, 2003)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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JAC FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP INC. 100 C. Palanca St. Quiapo, Manila will sell all unredeemed pledges for the months of AUG.& SEPT 2002 on MARCH 10, 2003 at 8:30am.
J. Lanuza Auctioneer

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V. ZAMORA Lic. Auctioneer

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE is given that the Passport HH407002, ticket and Employment Overseas Certificate of LEONIDES M. DAMIAN were lost on Feb. 5, '03. In case found, pls. contact the owner @ 890-9944 / 0919-2201198
(PDI-February 26, 2003)

Notice is hereby given of the loss of Bacnotan Consolidated Industries, Inc. stock certificate numbered 24066 and 25425 representing nine hundred twelve (912) shares and six hundred eighty four (684) shares respectively under the name of LUIS H. LIM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, INC. If no contest received, new certificate will be issued.
(PDI-Feb.26,Mar.5&12,2003)

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mourn the passing away of its beloved founder

REMEDIOS SANTOS PAMINTUAN

of San Fernando, Pampanga and Davao City

who peacefully joined our Lord on February 24, 2003 at the age of 85.

Her loving children **Ana Mari**, **Bingay**, **Sonny** (and **Alice**), **Kiching** (and **Ann**), **Mike** (and **Tes**), **Tommy** (and **Juliet**) and her loving sister **Elena Santos**; her grandchildren **Cindy**, **Scott**, **Marijac**, **Macky**, **Chris**, **Kim**, **Joanne**, **JM**, **Tina**, **Michelle**, **Michael**, **Tracy** and **TJ**; other relatives and dear friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes, Davao City.

Cremation services will take place on Thursday, February 27, 2003 starting with a Mass at 10:00 a.m. at Davao Memorial Park.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Atty. ESPIRIDION Ga. HECETA, Jr.

Wish to express our heartfelt and eternal gratitude to all our dear and true friends for their tireless efforts in helping us through these challenging times.

We also wish to express our sincerest gratitude to those who condoled with us, who offered prayers, sent flowers and in countless other ways lent us their strength and support during our time of bereavement.

He whom we loved has moved on to a better place, but his memory lives on in our hearts, our minds and our prayers forever.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:6

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." **John 11:25-26**

RAMON MADLANGBAYAN GONZALES

of Tanauan, Batangas

Peacefully joined Our Creator on February 20, 2003 at the age of 79.

His loving wife **Oliva Yoingco**;
children **Biboy** and **Vicky Nuevas**, **Junnie** and **Jennie Wong**, **Cherry** and **Tash Manalang**, **Tess** and **Romy Dilag**;
grandchildren **Michiki**, **Chuckie**, **Richard**, **Joy**, **Joseph**, **Raissa**, **Regina**, **Micah**, **Ramon**, **Raymond**;
brothers and sisters Nelly (†) and Angel (†) Abdon, Jose (†), Fidela, Ceferina and Ramon (†) Marfori, Fe, Lea (†), Luz (†) and Querubin (†) de Guzman, Jesus and Rosario, Oliva and Rosauro Castillo, Primitivo Jr. (†) and Josefina; request relatives, friends for fervent prayers and special petitions for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains will arrive from San Francisco, California on February 28, 2003 and will lie in state at the Sanctuario de San Antonio Parish, Capilla del Señor, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 2, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City after the 1:30 p.m. Holy Mass at the Sanctuario de San Antonio Parish.

BENITO UY FERNANDEZ

"Benny of Good Morning Trading"
Cauayan, Isabela & Valenzuela City

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
and joined his beloved wife "LILY"
on February 20, 2003 at the age of 67.

His presently loving wife **TERRY**; children **LILIBETH & POO, HENRY & NITA, RENE, IMEE & PAUL**; grandchildren; brothers & sisters; nephews & nieces; relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 27, 2003 at the Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

The Missionary Sisters
Servants of the Holy Spirit
Announce the death of

SISTER CHRISTOPHINE, S.SP.S.
(BERNARDINA RAGASA)

on February 25, 2003 at the age of 72
at the Convent of the Holy Spirit, Quezon City

Mass of the Resurrection will be offered
on Thursday, February 27, 2003 at 3:00 p.m.
at the Convent of the Holy Spirit
8 Poinsettia Road, Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the Christ the King Cemetery,
B. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City.

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." John 11:25-26

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

JESUS SINGIAN LAZATIN

Who joined our Creator and his loving wife ***"CELIA"***
in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ on February 17, 2003

Wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, cards, messages of sympathy, stayed vigil and made donations in his memory to the Mother of Good Counsel Seminary burse.

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock my redeemer..."
Psalm 21:15

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

ELISA SANCHEZ GAJETE

of Caramuran, Catanduanes & Quezon City

Has joined her husband "Jose" and peacefully rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord on February 25, 2003 at the age of 74.

Her loving children **Nonie & Virgie, Nene & Bobby, Marilou & Ariel**, and **Marisel & Larry**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request for prayers for her eternal happiness.

Her remains lie in state at the Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 1, 2003 at the Himlayang Pilipino immediately after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Eng'r. Luis R. Saldaña

of Samal, Bataan and Quezon City

Peacefully passed into eternal life
on 24 February 2003.

His bereaved wife **Leonarda**; children **Nancy** and **Lito Consunji**; **Cathy** and **Ramby Nolido**, **Rosarie** and **Kim Escaño** and **Jolan**; together with his grandchildren **Joanne**, **Bianca**, **Nikka** and **Carlos**; his sister **Amparo**; his nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Sta. Maria Della Strada Church in Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Viewing shall be from 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight. A tribute is scheduled on Thursday evening, 7:30 p.m. with a Holy Mass.

Interment will be announced later.

Our Beloved
"Mommy"

FELICIANA JACOB MATEO

of Urdaneta City, Pangasinan
Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 71.

"Mommy rest in peaceful sleep; You are budded on earth to bloom in Heaven; Gone but never forgotten."

Her loving husband, Ret. Brig. Gen. ***Lorenzo Mateo*** *(AFP); children Dr.* ***Julius Mateo****, Engr.* ***Lorenzo Mateo Jr. & Arlyn****, Engr.* ***Manolito Bajet & Marilou****, Major* ***Christopher Mateo*** *(PNP), City Councilor* ***Alexander Mateo*** *(Urdaneta City) &* ***Star****, Reg. Dir.* ***Sam Samuels*** *(ICAO, United Nations) &* ***Emie****; Grandchildren* ***Mika, Love, Lorlynn, Andrey, Gerrald, Isel, Miguel, Kate, Bea, Ryan & Jc****; living brothers* ***Cirilo & Soledad, Rudy & Lolita****; nephews & nieces, relatives & friends request for your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.*

Her remains lie in state at the family residence in Mateo's Farm Urdaneta City, Pangasinan.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 8, 2003 at Urdaneta Memorial Park after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Immaculate Concepcion Church, Urdaneta City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Message of Thanks
We, the family of the late

SY HUA BING DE GUZMAN

of Lucena Marktown, E.D.G. Enterprises
who passed away on February 17, 2003

wish to express our deepest gratitude to all of you who offered prayers and material help; kept vigil with us; and in many immeasurable ways condoled with us in these most difficult times.

In Loving Memory
on the ***17th Death Anniversary*** *of*

NEMESIO I. YABUT

1925 - 1986

Masses will be offered today, February 26, 2003 at the following churches:

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PARISH, *Orense St., Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City*	**6:00 AM**
STS. PETER & PAUL PARISH, *P. Burgos St., Makati City*	**6:00 AM**
SACRED HEART CHAPEL, *San Antonio Village, Makati City*	**7:00 AM**
SANCTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH, *Forbes Park, Makati City*	**12:15 PM**
STO. NIÑO DE PAZ CHAPEL, *Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City*	**5:45 PM**
NUESTRA SRA. DE GRACIA PARISH, *Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City*	**6:00 PM**
ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI CHAPEL, *Magallanes Village, Makati City*	**6:00 PM**
ST. ANDREW, THE APOSTLE PARISH, *Bel-Air II, Makati City*	**6:30 AM**
ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH, *Pasay Road, Makati City*	**6:00 PM**

On the occasion of the
1st Year Death Anniversary of

Dr. Gregorio Carbonell Goloyugo

U.P. Class 1931 - Dr. of Veterinary Medicine
Born Nov. 17, 1904 - Died Feb. 26, 2002
Former Assistant Director of Bureau of Animal Industry

To all our friends and relatives, please accept our deepest gratitude and thanks for your presence, prayers and condolences during our time of loss.

We ask for those whose lives he has touched with his generosity and undiscriminating charity for your prayers. DADDY - we miss and love you, pray for us for the continued success of the projects and programs that you and mama have inspired, launched envisioned.

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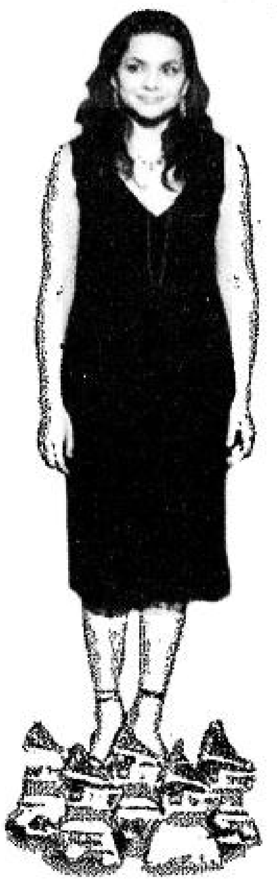
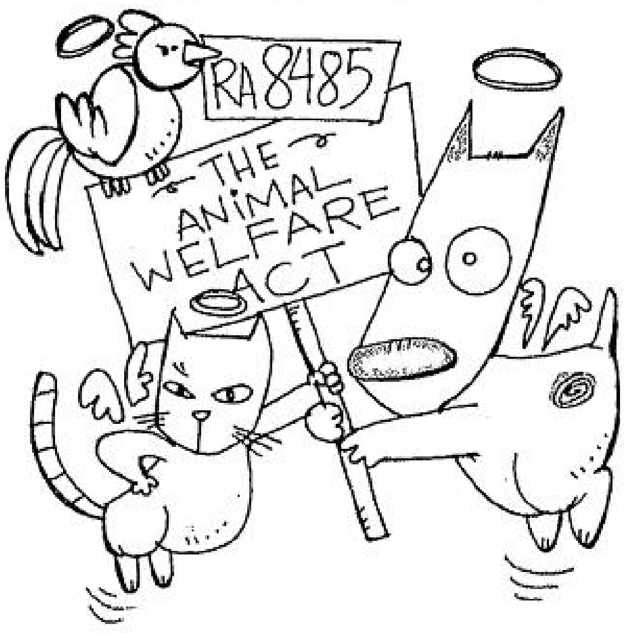
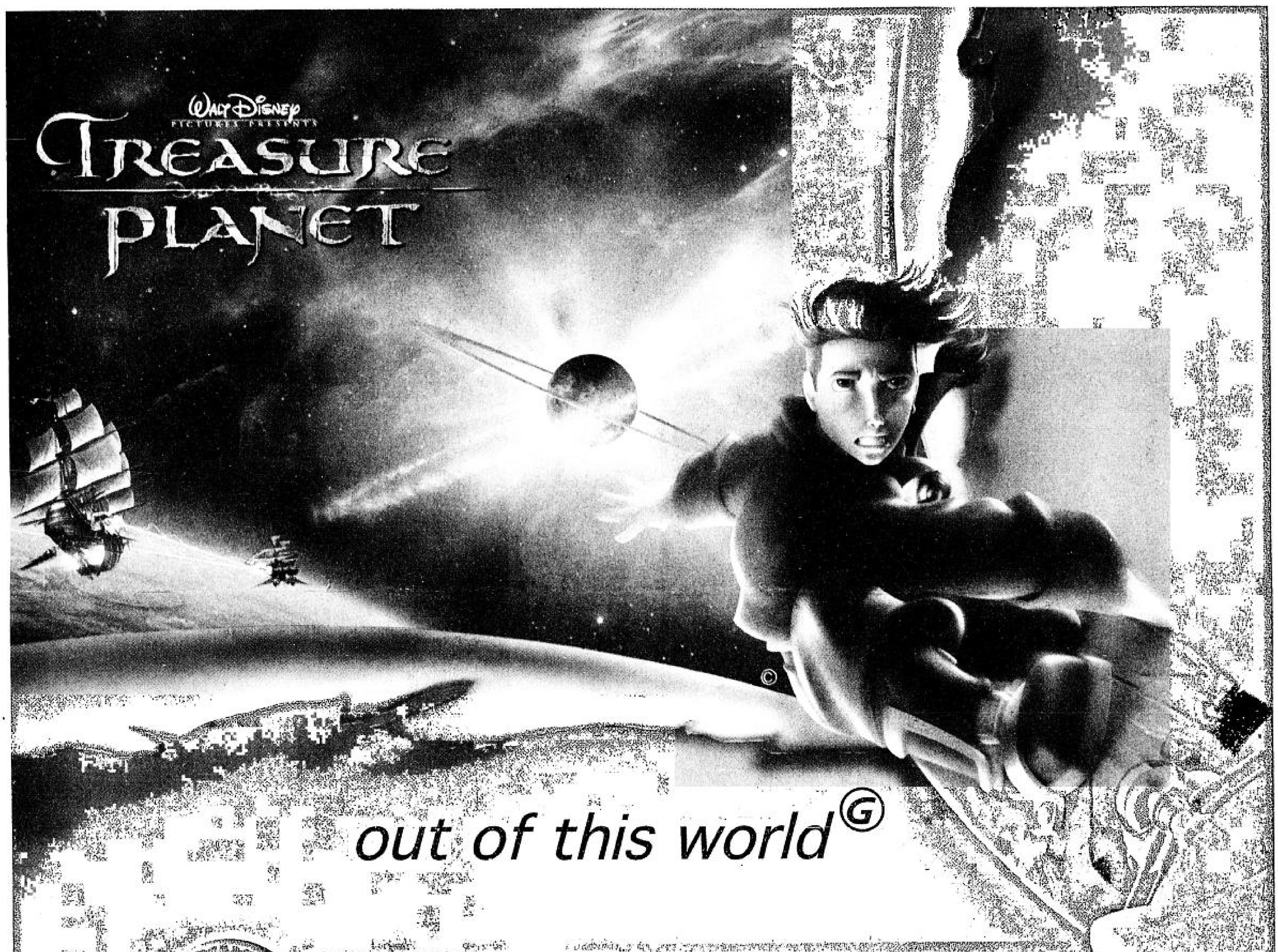


The 2bU! mad mix issue

The Grammys, palate pleasers, soda history, animal cruelty, Ralph Fiennes as fantasy, and the young voice behind 'Treasure Planet' as a treasure find—there's something for everyone in this tantalizing omnibus





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Soda, enduring—and evolving—symbol of pop culture

The soft drink industry has been revitalized by its commercial partnership with the fast-food business

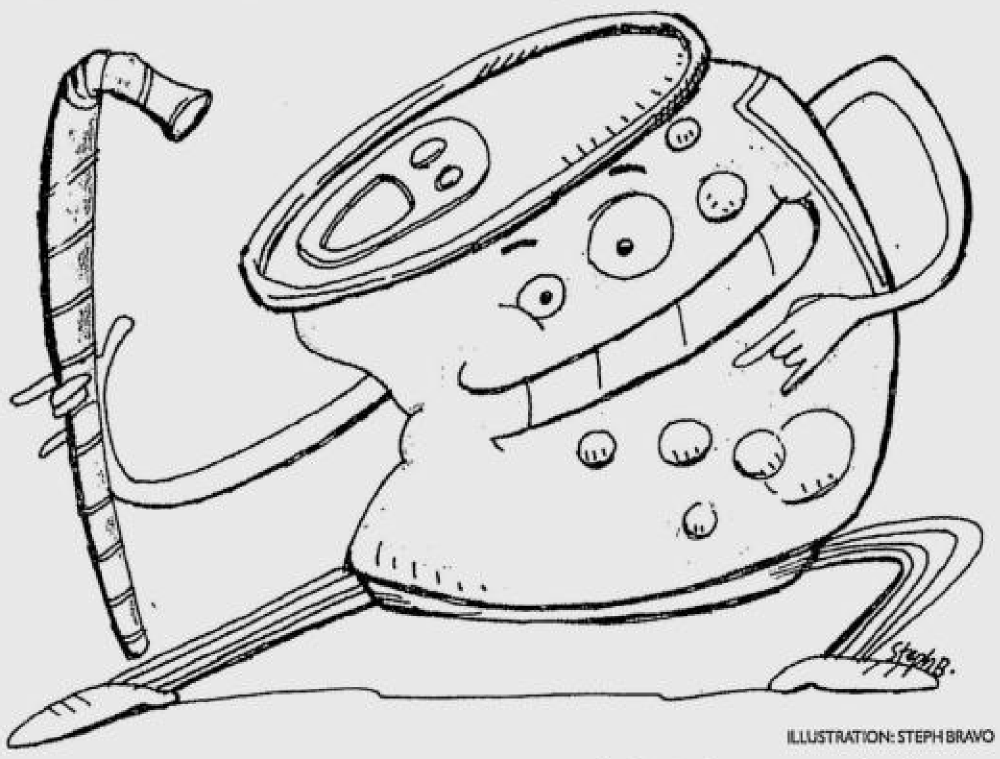

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

THE SODA has become recognized worldwide as a symbol of 21st century pop culture. The beverage has affected many aspects of people's lifestyle, its commercial jingles becoming mobile phone ringtones and its slogans transformed into ideas people adopt.

In the 1830s, the foundations for the huge soda-bottling industry were laid. Scientists developed a method for mass-producing carbonated water in the laboratory. Initially, the bubbly liquid became a popular therapeutic and thirst-quenching drink available in drugstores.

Pharmacists experimented with various botanical ingredients to give the water curative properties. The experiments failed but they gave birth to interesting flavors—ginger ale, root beer, sarsaparilla, strawberry and lemon, to name a few.

Watering holes

Consumers drank their fill of the beverage in soda fountains, forerunners of today's coffee shops. People who wanted a social life went to the pharmacy, specifically the soda foundation. They talked with friends as drinks were mixed on the spot. But the demand for packaged soft drinks also grew.

The search for a way to bottle soda revolved primarily on the lid. Carbonation made corks pop out of the bottle. The problem was solved with the invention of the crown cap.

Soda fountains started to lose their clientele as people began to enjoy their soda at home. Many opted to became retailers of the new bottled beverage.

The 19th-century campaign for temperance endorsed "soft" drinks to keep people away from "hard," alcoholic beverages. Women's groups, like the Women's Christian Temperance Union, supported the campaign.

Giving the soda a further boost was a proclamation by the United States government, at one point, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor. Even the US War Department classified the drinks as "essential to soldier morale."

These days, the soft-drink industry has been revitalized by its commercial partnership with the fast-food business. Soda has become even more of a fixture in many people's lives.

But today's soda is far removed from earlier versions. For one thing, there is a lot of diversity in terms of flavor. The "war" between industry giants Pepsi and Coca-Cola has also been riveting.

The one-upmanship is reflected in the speed by which both companies come up with and the number of new flavors. Pepsi has its flagship: Pepsi-Cola, Pepsi One, Pepsi Twist, Pepsi Blue and Mountain Dew. Coca-Cola has Barq's Root Beer, Cherry Coke, Coke Light and Vanilla Coke.

The soda wars

In the past year or so, the soda wars have been fiercer than usual. Pepsi has injected a fruity aftertaste and added color to its product. It has also "recruited" more celebrities for its commercials—the Spice Girls, Kulay and Britney Spears, among others.

On the other hand, Coca-cola has a more lifestyle-based approach, with more yuppies as models than stars. Coke has become part of many student's lifestyle, providing the caffeine and sugar rush to get through a night of studying. The latest Coke concoction to hit Philippine shores is Vanilla Coke, which has been described as tasting a bit like marshmallow.

Other companies have come up with their own variations on the soda theme. Supermarket shelves carry apple, mango and cream-flavored sodas, among others. Soon, even odder beverages will probably be sold as well like milk soda, or even glittery soda.

In terms of nutrition, soda has not much to offer. Everyone from doctors to self-help books to parents discourage people from drinking it. The beverage is mainly a combination of water, carbon dioxide, flavors, coloring, caffeine, preservatives, sweeteners and others. Plain water is a more healthful drink.

For Filipinos, of course, the release of local sodas like Honey Calamansi and Dalandan Soda, to name a few, is an opportunity to thumb their noses on the imported varieties. That the locals are cheaper also helps persuade Pinoys to be more nationalistic. And, of course, in social functions, soft drinks are always a wiser option to alcohol.

Moreover, many of today's soda ads endorse values like friendship and family ties.

Sources: www.nsda.org, www.globaled.org

E-mail the author at diet_dalandan_soda@yahoo.com

Two centuries of carbonation

1798	The term "soda water" is first coined.
1819	Samuel Fahnestock patents the "soda fountain."
1835	The first bottled soda water is sold in the USA.
1861	The term "pop" is first coined.
1874	The first ice-cream soda is sold.
1881	The first cola-flavored beverage is introduced.
1885	Charles Aderton invents "Dr. Pepper" in Waco, Texas.
1886	Dr. John S. Pemberton invents "Coca-Cola" in Atlanta, Georgia.
1892	William Painter invents the crown bottle cap.
1898	Caleb Bradham invents "Pepsi-Cola."
1918	"Sarsi" is introduced.
1920s	The first automatic vending machines dispensed sodas into cups.
1929	The Howdy Company debuts its new drink "Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Sodas" later called "7 Up."
1952	The first diet soft drink is sold as "No-Cal Beverage," a ginger ale.
1957	The first aluminum cans are used to package soda.
1959	The first diet cola is sold.
1962	The pull-ring tab is first marketed by The Pittsburgh Brewing Company.
1965	Soft drinks in cans are dispensed from vending machines.
1970	Plastic bottles are used for soft drinks.
1973	The PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) bottle is created.
2000-	Soda variety increases. More Pinoy sodas enter the market, like Zest-o's Dalandan Soda. Recently, the much-anticipated Vanilla Coke is introduced.

INQ GRAPHIC: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

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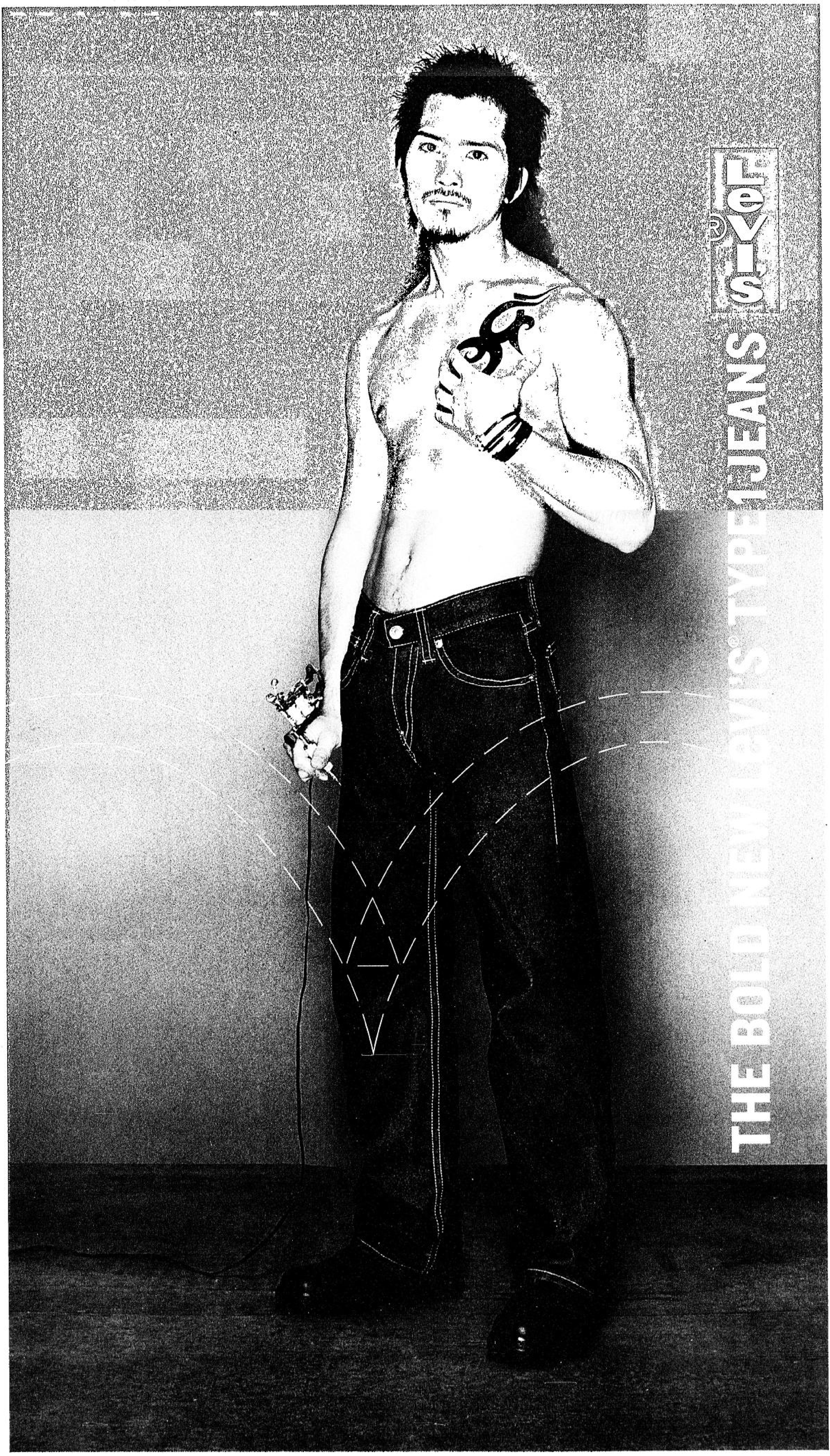

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2bU! THERMOMETER

Hits and misses: postscript to the Grammys

N'SYNC'S tribute to BeeGees. When you take away the flashy clothes, overlapping beats and annoyingly cheesy music, you can finally focus on the voices. The boys can sing. We're impressed. Their a cappella medley was touching. After their song, Barry and Robin Gibb accepted an honorary award for the BeeGees, asking the son of Maurice Gibb, their brother who passed away last month, to join them. Maurice's widow, who was in the audience, was tearful.

2BU! correspondent Maui Reyes' fave moment: "When the all-star cast (that included) Bruce Springsteen and Dave Grohl sang The Clash's 'London Calling.' It would have been better if they did a medley of that and a Ramones song, as a tribute to Dee Dee. And I hope Avril learned a thing or two about good punk rock."

BEST SPEECH. Most winners just mumbled their thank yous. John Mayer was one of the very few who said anything remotely witty during his speech after winning the award for Best Pop Male Performance: "I have always prided myself in being bigger than the moment, in being smarter than the moment. But I'm just a 16-year-old in this moment. This moment is kicking my ass... This is very fast. I promise to catch up."

THE SWEEP. One journalist called this year's Grammys "The Norah Jones" awards. And rightly so. Norah and the people who worked on her album, "Come Away with Me," brought home a total of eight awards, including Record of the Year, Best Female Pop Vocal Performance, Best Pop Vocal Album, Best New Artist and Album of the Year.

Despite winning eight awards, Norah Jones fails to break Grammy record

NOW that's what we call a goodie bag. This year's Grammy nominees were gifted with goodie bags that contained: a Blackberry two-way pager, DKNY jeans, two-night stay at any Ian Schrager hotel, 13-inch Philips television, Lalique rings and Casio digital camera watches. Each goodie bag was worth around $20,000.

GWEN STEFANI was hot, hot, hot in No Doubt's performance. "I'm gonna go cry. I'll see you later," she said after the band won in the Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal category.

KIM CATRALL, a surprise presenter, seemed to be still on "Samantha" (her character in "Sex & the City) mode. She described the category assigned to her as "very close to my heart." The award? Male performance.

INSTEAD of the usual expression of gratitude, Eminem used his acceptance speech to pay tribute to rappers who influenced him.

YOUTH POWER. Young new artists took the Grammys by storm. Michelle Branch was a co-winner in the Best Pop Collaboration with Vocals category for "The Game Of Love," which she recorded with Santana. Mayer, who won for "Your Body Is a Wonderland," beat Sting, James Taylor and Elton John. Ashanti won Best Contemporary R&B and Nelly won Best Rap/Sung Collaboration with Kelly for "Dilemma" and Best Male Rap Solo Performance for "Hot In Here."

NO RECORD. Although Norah's sweep was impressive, it still wasn't good enough to beat Michael Jackson and Santana's Grammy records.

ASHANTI looked like she got out of bed and forgot to change out of her nightie.

DUSTIN HØFFMAN referred to Bruce Springsteen as "Bruce Springstreet."

FOR SOMEONE who is always attempting to project nonchalance, Avril Lavigne took her sweet time having the words "Rock On" stitched into her coat's lining. She must have spent more time on her coat than in rehearsals because, frankly, her performance sucked.

NORAH JONES appeared shy all throughout the show. But then again, that's part of her charm.

AFTER WINNING three awards, The Dixie Chicks said thank you to Sony for "kissing and making up" with them after last year's dispute. Just goes to show that it pays to forgive one's enemies.

ERYKAH BADU botched up her lines while talking about the Lifetime Achievement Award that was to be presented to Alan Lomax. "That's what I get for not coming to rehearsal," she said. She read her lines again and ended with "Applause." Lomax's family did not look pleased. We agree. It wasn't funny at all.

FAITH HILL'S performance was not at all pleasing to the ears.

Telling off a sponger

Niño Mark Sablan
& September Mabino

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

HOW do you approach a friend who you feel has been using you? One of my *barkada* has begun to take for granted the blow-outs I sometimes give, and now she expects me to pay for the meal whenever we go out.

My friend is a nice person and she's there when I need someone to talk to or someone to listen to me, but I can't help feeling that I'm being used. How do I deal with this?

MERCER

The way you can deal with this friend depends on your personality. For example, I'm not usually the confrontational type but when push comes to shove, I have no qualms about speaking out when I feel I am being used or pushed around. That way, people would know when I have lost my patience and when it is time to take me seriously.

Even if you think you're not that type, maybe it could still provide you an opportunity to resolve your problem. It seems that your friend expects you to let her act freely around you the way she does; if you surprise her by giving her a piece of your mind, then she would definitely start thinking twice about letting you pay her food bills.

Sure, your friend might get hurt if you tell her that she seems to be using you, because who knows how she perceives your relationship. But if the smooth mutual and unspoken route doesn't work for a relationship, then honesty and laying down concrete rules or guidelines would have to do.

Don't feel too guilty about wanting to make changes in your friendship and being blunt about it. The bottom line is, you only want to make your relationship better and, sometimes, that is not the easiest and the most painless thing to do.

SEP

Your nice friend might be an attentive ear, but she is also one hungry and ungrateful mouth.

Since you feel used, you do the talking. She doesn't know how much trouble she's become so let her know.

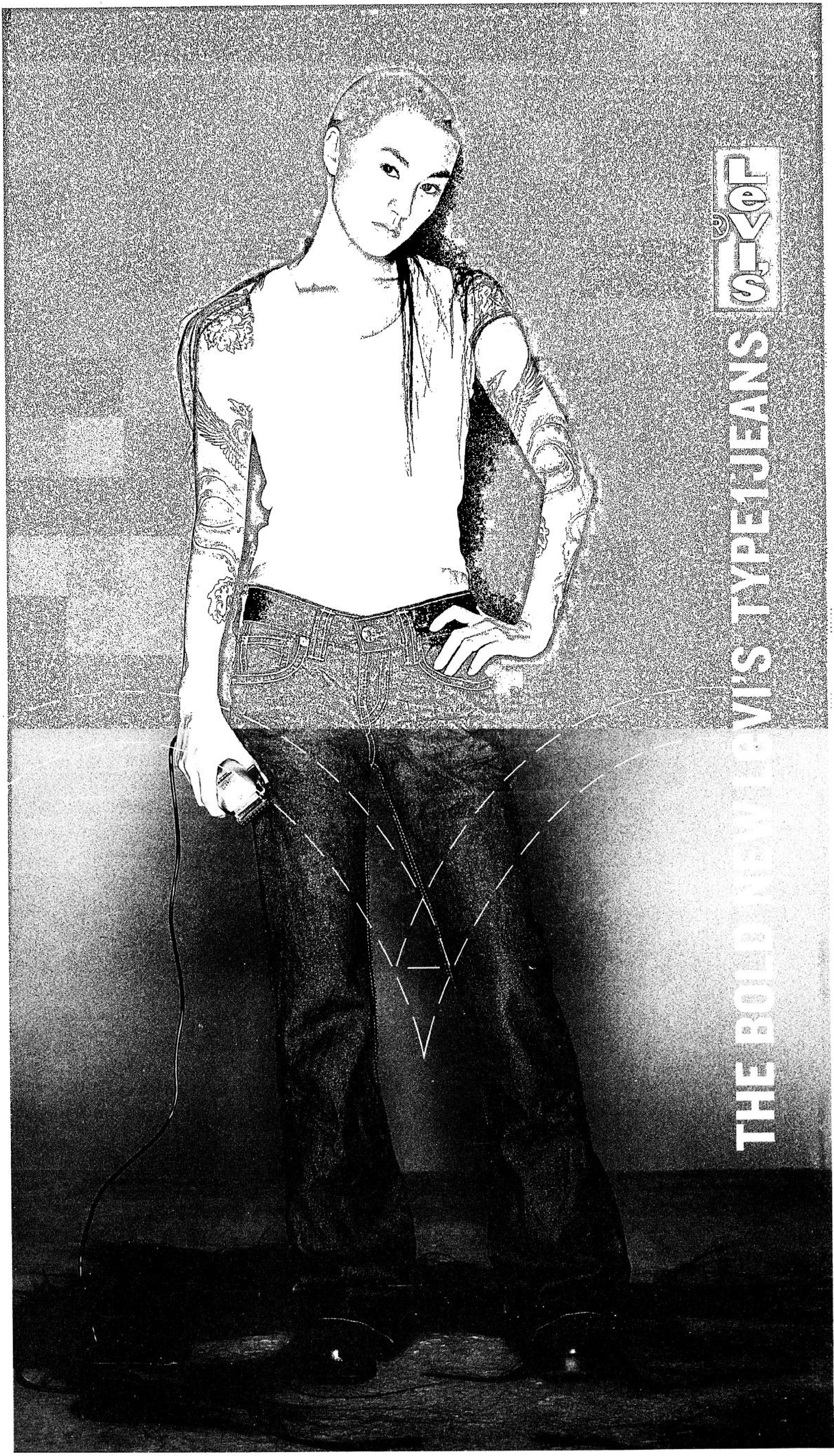
If you decide to go mute, avoid eating out. She must be presumptuous to expect you to take care of the bill every time you pig out. Burst her bubble by saying you're not hungry and you won't order anything, or pretend to go to the CR and return with a tray of goodies just enough for you. These are supposedly subtle signs to show her that you can only afford to provide for yourself or that you don't appreciate her ungratefulness.

If she ups and orders her own fries and drink, then it shows that you can be friends through other ways. If she eats your fries and drinks your soda, maybe your friend's pockets have holes in them.

Try to understand how she regards the friendship or how she looks at you. Maybe she sees you as the type who wouldn't mind paying. Maybe she considers you a Veronica Lodge. Maybe their house burned to a crisp.

Directly or indirectly, let her know that what she's doing isn't nice and that it bothers you. She may not be able to say it, but she'd be very thankful. And you and your wallet could both heave a sigh of relief.

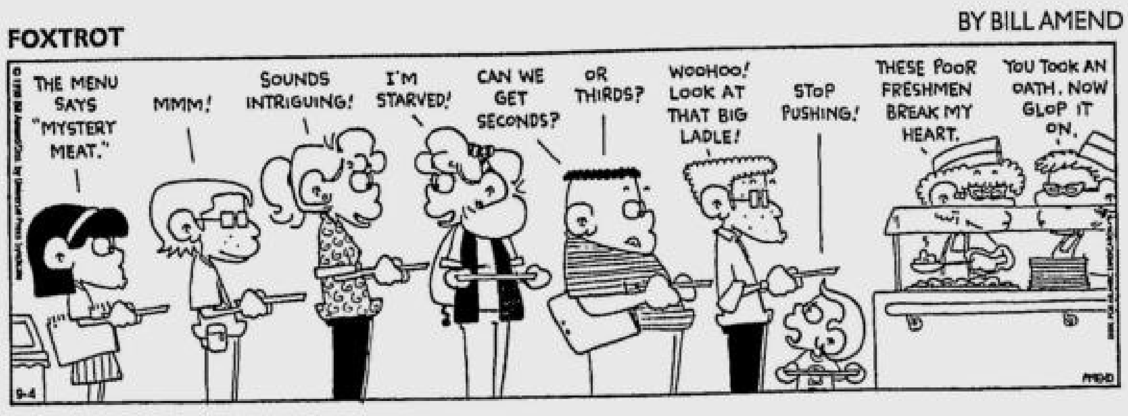
MARK


Levi's
THE BOLD NEW LEVI'S TYPE1 JEANS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ComicRelief
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2003

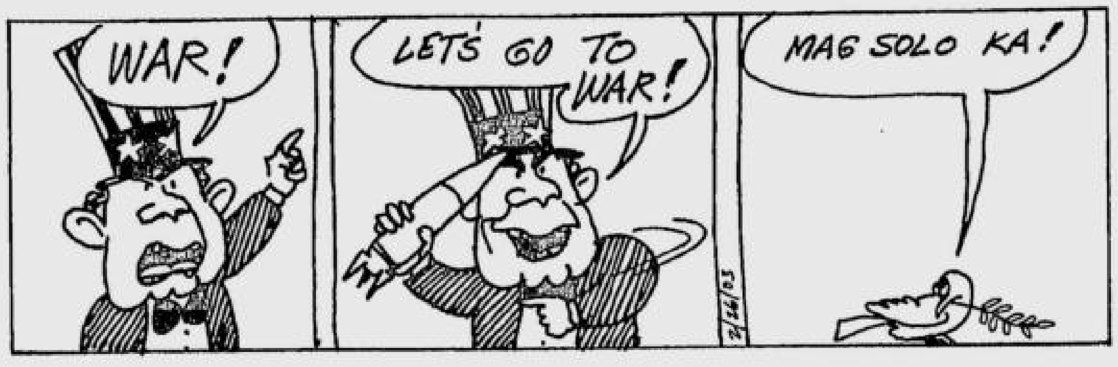
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


THE MENU SAYS "MYSTERY MEAT."
MMM!
SOUNDS INTRIGUING!
I'M STARVED!
CAN WE GET SECONDS?
OR THIRDS?
WOOHOO! LOOK AT THAT BIG LADLE!
STOP PUSHING!
THESE POOR FRESHMEN BREAK MY HEART.
YOU TOOK AN OATH. NOW GLOP IT ON.

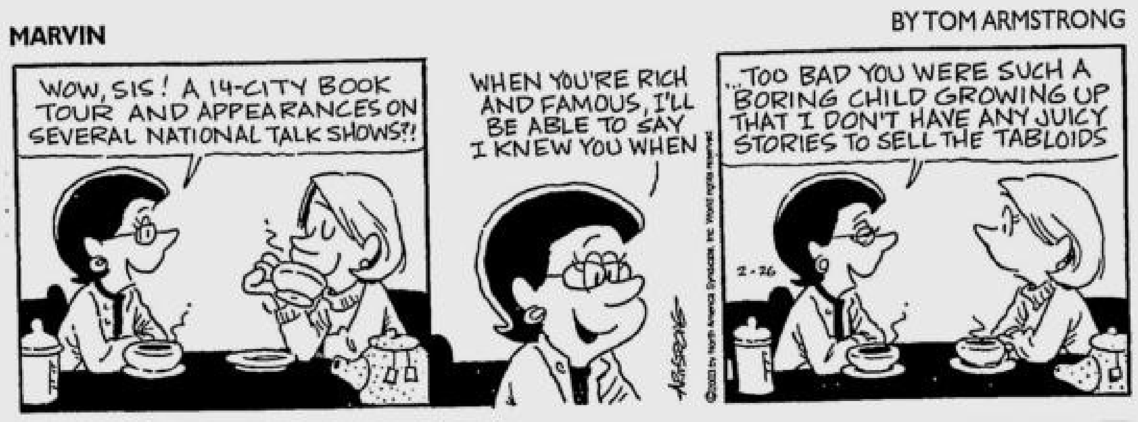
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WAR!
LET'S GO TO WAR!
MAG SOLO KA!

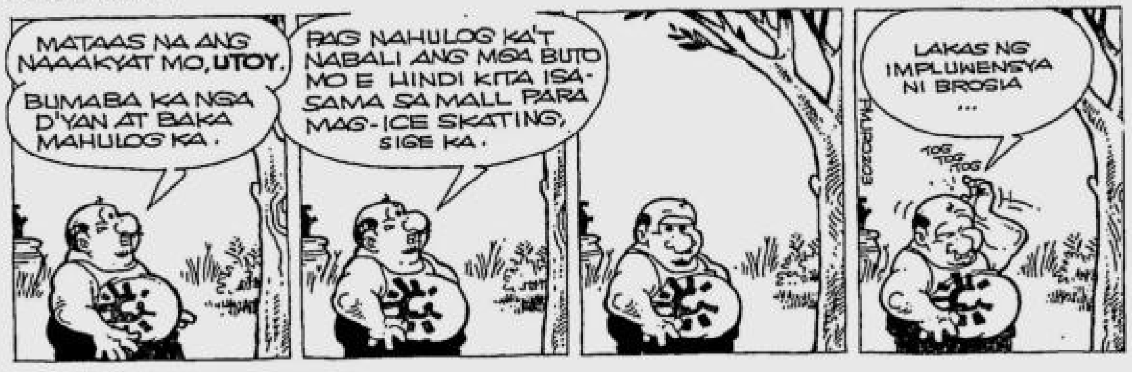
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WOW, SIS! A 14-CITY BOOK TOUR AND APPEARANCES ON SEVERAL NATIONAL TALK SHOWS?!
WHEN YOU'RE RICH AND FAMOUS, I'LL BE ABLE TO SAY I KNEW YOU WHEN
...TOO BAD YOU WERE SUCH A BORING CHILD GROWING UP THAT I DON'T HAVE ANY JUICY STORIES TO SELL THE TABLOIDS
2-26

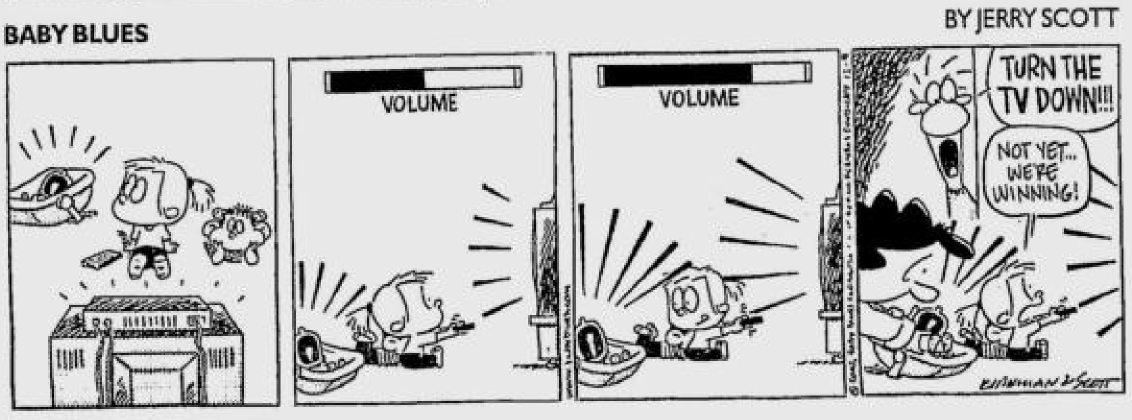
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MATAAS NA ANG NAAAKYAT MO, UTOY.
BUMABA KA NGA D'YAN AT BAKA MAHULOG KA.
PAG NAHULOG KA'T NABALI ANG MGA BUTO MO E HINDI KITA ISA-SAMA SA MALL PARA MAG-ICE SKATING, SIGE KA.
LAKAS NG IMPLUWENSYA NI BROSIA ...
TOG TOG TOG

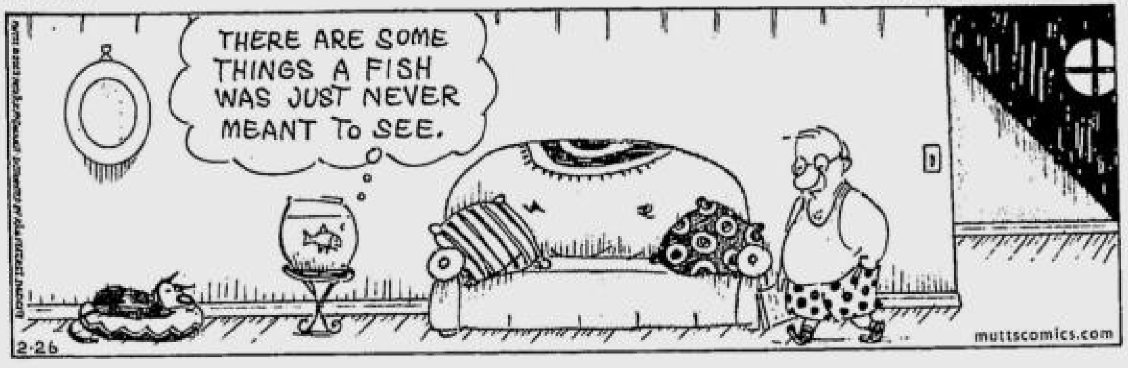
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


VOLUME
VOLUME
TURN THE TV DOWN!!!
NOT YET... WE'RE WINNING!

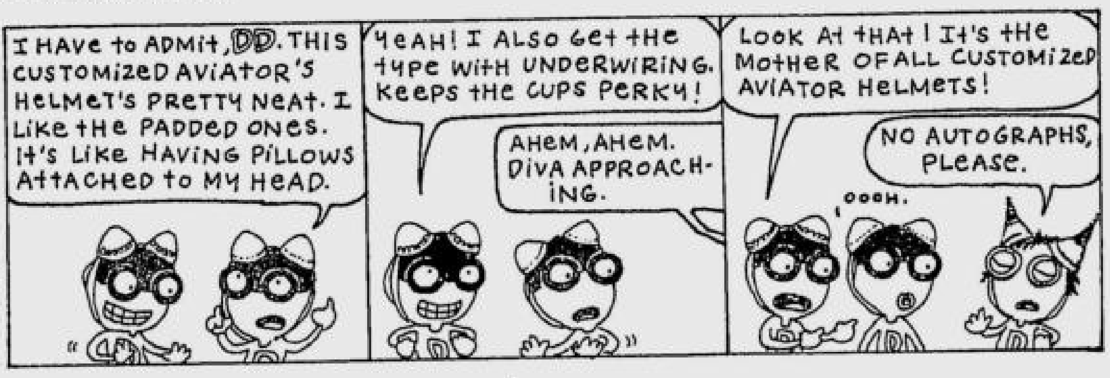
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THERE ARE SOME THINGS A FISH WAS JUST NEVER MEANT TO SEE.
2-26
muttscomics.com

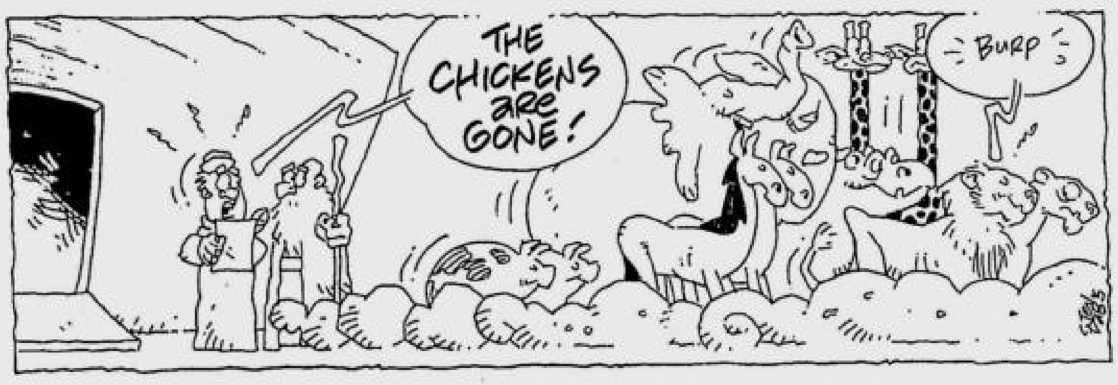
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I HAVE TO ADMIT, DD. THIS CUSTOMIZED AVIATOR'S HELMET'S PRETTY NEAT. I LIKE THE PADDED ONES. IT'S LIKE HAVING PILLOWS ATTACHED TO MY HEAD.
YEAH! I ALSO GET THE TYPE WITH UNDERWIRING. KEEPS THE CUPS PERKY!
AHEM, AHEM. DIVA APPROACHING.
LOOK AT THAT! IT'S THE MOTHER OF ALL CUSTOMIZED AVIATOR HELMETS!
NO AUTOGRAPHS, PLEASE.
OOOH.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THE CHICKENS ARE GONE!
BURP

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are unusually magnetic. You are also knowledgeable and worldly. This is because you have insight into the workings of everything around you. You love to explore new fields. You are as demanding of yourself as you are of others. In the year ahead, you will learn something important and will probably have more solitude.
Birthdate of: Joanne Woodward, actress; Elizabeth Taylor, actress; Ralph Nader, environmentalist/consumer advocate.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Advice from someone older can definitely benefit you today. Listen to what people have to say; you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good day to talk to someone about your long-range plans for the future. It is wise to be concerned about the future, because, after all, you have to spend the rest of your life there.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Serious discussions about publishing matters, higher education and foreign countries take place today. This is an excellent day for serious thinking and important concerns.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Talk to others at work about how to make the best use of the resources you have. Capitalize on what you already have rather than wishing you had something else.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): An older or more experienced friend might advise you about relationships or partnerships. Since relationships are so difficult for everyone, take advice wherever you can get it!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to get organized at work. You'll find it easy to attack detailed, involved tasks, because your critical faculty is unusually sharp.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Talk to children or young people about religion, life belief systems and the value of kindness. Teach them that how they act now actually creates their own future.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Make long-range plans for your old age or your security. You might prefer to be alone with your thoughts, because you feel cautious and conservative.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Discussions with partners are serious but meaningful. You want to know what purpose people and situations can serve you personally.

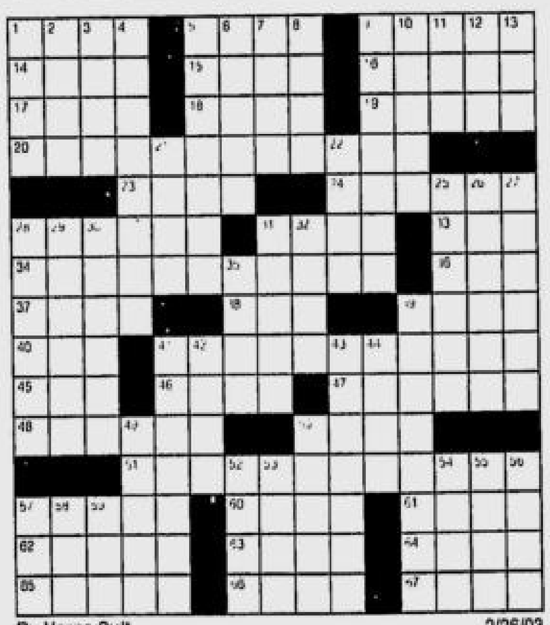
CAPRICORN: (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is an excellent day at work. You can concentrate on mental work that requires attention to detail. You will definitely measure twice so that you only have to cut once.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a good day to seek counsel from someone older about how to deal with children or romantic questions. Someone with more experience than you is willing to help.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your ability to research is fabulous today. You can ferret out solutions to old problems. The deeper you dig, the more you discover. Therefore, apply yourself, because you will definitely get results.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 RBI or ERA
5 Willing
9 Nursery pops
14 "GWTW" plantation
15 Aussie rockers
16 "Maria __"
17 Nearly round
18 "__ & Stitch"
19 Slow, musically
20 1988 car hit by Natalie Cole
23 Scrooge words
24 Endow with a spirit
28 Deep secrets
31 Window part
33 Nature watchdog grp.
34 1988 car hit by Pebbles
36 Saul's uncle
37 Aleutian island
38 __ Dawn Chong
39 Singer Tennille
40 Bottom-line figure
41 1964 car hit by the Hondells
45 Turn red, maybe
46 Poems of adoration
47 Bottommost
48 Oxygenize
50 __ your shirt on!
51 1966 car hit by Wilson Pickett
57 "The Stranger" author
60 Environs
61 Fourth dimension
62 Stood
63 Unwrap
64 Maui tourist destination
65 Runny cheeses
66 Season
67 Hit signs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By Verna Sult
Silver Spring, MD

2/26/03

DOWN
1 Red road sign
2 Rikki-Tikki-__
3 Island off Galway
4 Give some lip
5 Lancelot's son
6 Etching fluids
7 1551
8 Environmental sci.
9 Kim of "N.Y.P.D. Blue"
10 Guinness and Waugh
11 Bear bedroom
12 Social insect
13 Portuguese saint
21 Bamboo stem
22 Host after Carson
25 Wife of Paris
26 Overturns
27 Tethering rope
28 Actress Plummer
29 Overnight flight
30 Volcano opening
31 H.S. exams
32 Explorer Tasman
35 Art Deco artist
39 Canal walkways
41 Aquatic flowers
42 March time
43 Grand
44 Weeders' implements
49 Entertain
50 Prepare to pray
52 New Mexican art colony
53 Harp in Roma
54 Perjurer
55 KP link
56 Votes for
57 Dancer Calloway
58 LAX or IAD info
59 Miss Piggy's question

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

D	U	F	F	■	A	B	L	E	■	T	R	O	P	E
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S	E	R	A	■	O	N	A	N	■	A	D	E	L	E
I	A	M	T	H	E	G	R	E	A	T	E	S	T	■
■	■	■	T	U	B	A	■	■	N	C	O	■	■	■
A	L	E	■	R	A	L	E	I	G	H	■	B	A	T
R	O	M	E	O	■	■	A	C	E	■	H	A	R	E
I	C	A	N	N	O	T	T	E	L	L	A	L	I	E
S	A	I	D	■	C	E	E	■	■	A	S	S	E	T
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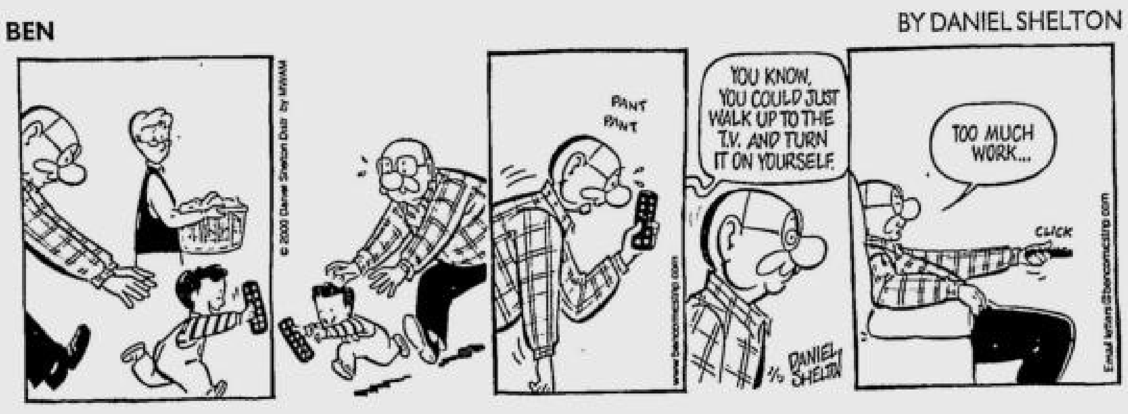
2/26/03

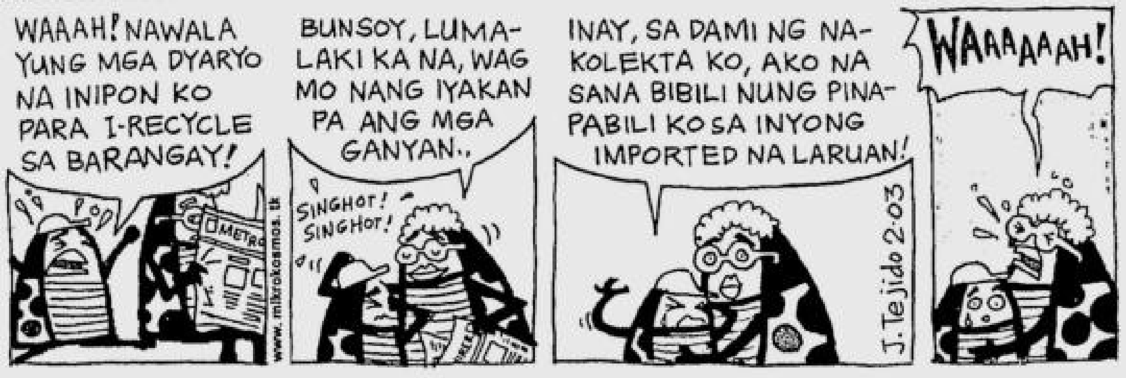
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


PANT PANT
YOU KNOW, YOU COULD JUST WALK UP TO THE T.V. AND TURN IT ON YOURSELF.
TOO MUCH WORK...
CLICK
DANIEL SHELTON

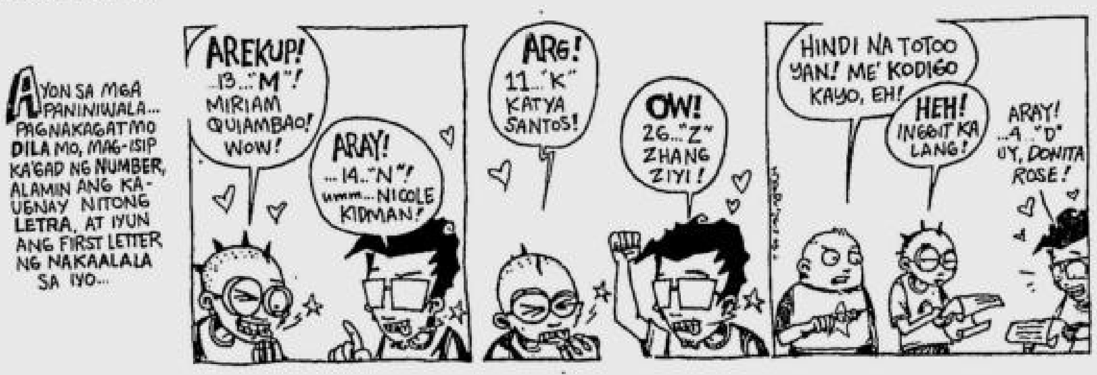
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


WAAAH! NAWALA YUNG MGA DYARYO NA INIPON KO PARA I-RECYCLE SA BARANGAY!
BUNSOY, LUMALAKI KA NA, WAG MO NANG IYAKAN PA ANG MGA GANYAN..
SINGHOT! SINGHOT!
INAY, SA DAMI NG NAKOLEKTA KO, AKO NA SANA BIBILI NUNG PINAPABILI KO SA INYONG IMPORTED NA LARUAN!
WAAAAAAH!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
J. Tejido 2-03

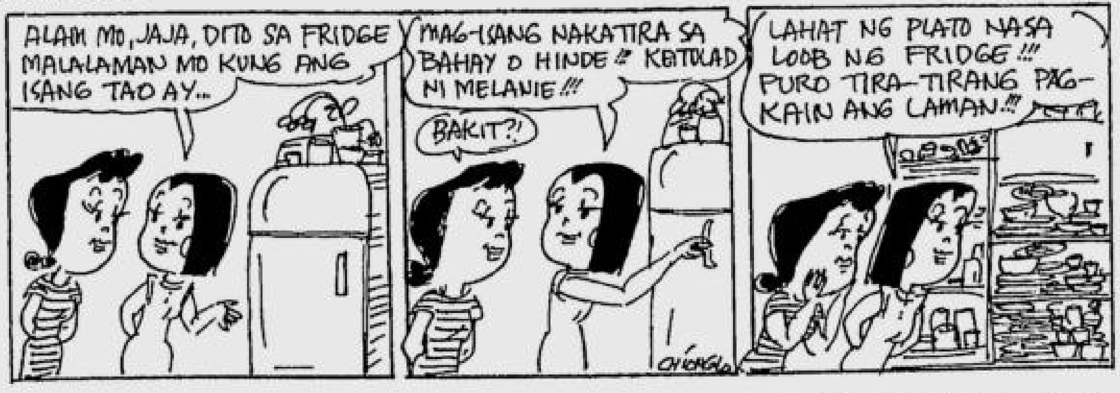
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


AYON SA MGA PANINIWALA... PAGNAKAGAT MO DILA MO, MAG-ISIP KA'GAD NG NUMBER, ALAMIN ANG KA-UGNAY NITONG LETRA, AT IYUN ANG FIRST LETTER NG NAKAALALA SA IYO...
AREKUP! ..13.."M"! MIRIAM QUIAMBAO! WOW!
ARAY! ...14.."N"! umm... NICOLE KIDMAN!
ARG! 11.."K" KATYA SANTOS!
OW! 26..."Z" ZHANG ZIYI!
HINDI NA TOTOO YAN! ME' KODIGO KAYO, EH!
HEH! INGGIT KA LANG!
ARAY! ...A..."D" UY, DONITA ROSE!

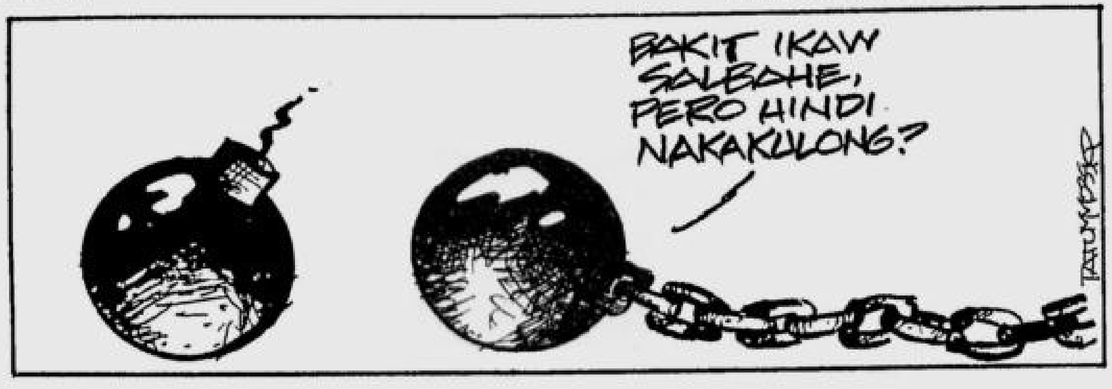
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ALAM MO, JAJA, DITO SA FRIDGE MALALAMAN MO KUNG ANG ISANG TAO AY...
MAG-ISANG NAKATIRA SA BAHAY O HINDE!! KatuLAD NI MELANIE!!!
BAKIT?!
LAHAT NG PLATO NASA LOOB NG FRIDGE!!! PURO TIRA-TIRANG PAGKAIN ANG LAMAN!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BAKIT IKAW SALBAHE, PERO HINDI NAKAKULONG?
TATUM

2BU! RECOMMENDS

Musts for your palate -Part 3

By Pam Pastor

EVERY year, we give you a serving of treats that will make your mouth water. Here's another dose of goodies that you absolutely have to try.

Gayuma's Better Than Sex Chocolate Cake. The name seems presumptuous, doesn't it? But you'll change your mind after you try this chocolate concoction. The sinfulness of Better Than Sex will be enough to convert anyone who claims not to be chocoholic. "Orgasmic" is how some people describe it. We wouldn't disagree.

Gayuma's Pavlova. This is the angelic counterpart of Better Than Sex. This meringue-based dessert is heaven on earth. Topped with whipped cream and fresh fruits, it is light, fluffy and an absolute delight. Enjoy it in the restaurant or bring home an entire cake for your whole family to enjoy.

Bubba Gump's Frozen Lemon-Ups. Their icy lemonade comes in pink and blue. One serving (which is one enormous glass) is enough to wash down a big meal at Bubba's.

Bubba Gump's Cheesy Fries. If you think this is just your basic French fries dumped with what tastes like Cheez-Wiz-based sauce, you better think again. In Bubba Gump's version, the spuds are smothered with Smoked Wisconsin Cheddar Cheese sauce and topped with sour cream, green onions and bacon bits. The cheese mixture is flavorful and spicy. Here's a warning: this can be very addicting.

Cibo's Potato Chips with Mayonnaise. You can enjoy it in any of Cibo's branches or bring it home with you. The big winner here is the mayonnaise. Cibo whips up mayo that is not too sour like the normal local brands tend to be. Their mayo is peppery and flavorful without being overly rich. Even people who stay away from mayonnaise will not be able to resist. I should know, my friends who claim to be "allergic" to mayo attacked my loot at home. Good news, you can buy the mayo by the jar.

Cibo's Grape Shake. Mango, strawberry, buko, even mango-banana—been there, done that. But have you ever tried grape shake? If you haven't, you better. Choose between red and white and enjoy.

Vanilla Coke. This is a soda float in a can. It's so good you can enjoy it without food.

Zest-O's Dalandan Soda. If you still haven't tried this, we only have one question for you. Under which rock have you been hiding? Zest-O resurrects the *dalandan* with this refreshing drink. If you're calorie-conscious, try the diet version.

Childhood favorite

Crispy Pata from Aling Pining. One of my favorite childhood memories was going to Halcon Street with my grandpa to buy crispy *pata*, which we would all enjoy at my grandparents' place. It was only recently that I found out Aling Pining's family has been selling crispy *pata* from their home since 1970. The longevity of their business can be attributed to the quality of their crispy *pata*—it is crisp (and stays crispy for hours—even after reheating) and tasty. Their vinegar-based sauce goes with it perfectly. Not bad, especially since one crispy *pata* costs only P190-P200 (a lot of restaurants charge up to P400). Visit 175 Halcon St., La Loma, QC, or call 741-8536.

Sentro's Coffee Pie. I was not exactly a coffee fan but Sentro's Coffee Pie changed my mind. It is creamy and melts in your mouth. The serving may seem small but it is perfectly filling.

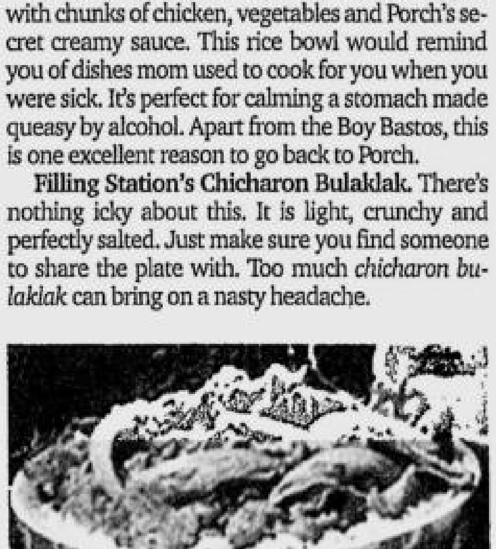
Country Waffles' Peanut Butter and Banana Waffle. Let the perfect combination of the saltiness of peanut butter, the sweetness of bananas, the subtle buttery flavor of the waffle and sweet stickiness of the maple syrup explode in your mouth. The best thing about this? You can enjoy it any time of the day—or at least until Country Waffles' closing time.

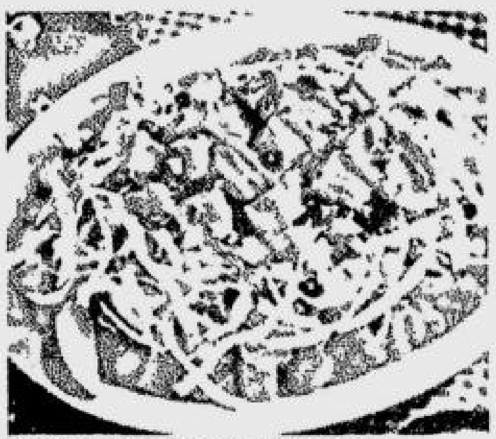
Via Mare's Crispy Binagoongan. Here's a twist to an old Filipino favorite. Eating crispy *binagoongan* would mean enjoying the crispy goodness of *lechon kawali* with the strong and intoxicating flavors of *binagoongan* in one bite.

Congo Grill's grilled squid. Tender and perfectly marinated, Congo Grill's grilled squid is a gastronomic delight, with or without alcohol.

Porch's Porch Rice. Steaming hot rice topped with chunks of chicken, vegetables and Porch's secret creamy sauce. This rice bowl would remind you of dishes mom used to cook for you when you were sick. It's perfect for calming a stomach made queasy by alcohol. Apart from the Boy Bastos, this is one excellent reason to go back to Porch.

Filling Station's Chicharon Bulaklak. There's nothing icky about this. It is light, crunchy and perfectly salted. Just make sure you find someone to share the plate with. Too much *chicharon bulaklak* can bring on a nasty headache.


YOSHINOYA'S beef bowl


CPK'S BBQ Chopped Chicken Salad

Try these 2bU! favorites. Your taste buds will be grateful

Haagen Dazs' Dulce de Leche. This is the ice cream version of Argentina's traditional dessert, which is made by caramelizing sugar in milk for many hours. Haagen Dazs' recipe is the perfect blend of caramel and cream, made even more delicious by the swirls of caramel. Enjoy a pint at home or share it with a loved one.

Häagen-Dazs

Frio Mixx's Oreo Shake-a-moo. If you love Oreos or milkshakes, this drink is for you.

Taters' barbecue potato chips. These barbecue potato chips are served hot, crispy and screaming with the tangy spiciness of barbecue. These chips are so good that you'd crave for them even if you have no plans of watching a movie. These chips are so good that I sometimes go all the way to Glorietta just to buy them.

Safari chocolate bar. If you're craving chocolate and your pocket's almost empty, hit your neighborhood *sari-sari* store and ask for Safari. This chocolate-covered caramel, peanut and wafer snack is such a delight you'd forget that it's only P6.

Creamy and crisp

Friday's Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad. This Caesar's salad is one of the best I've ever had. The dressing is creamy, the Romaine lettuce crisp, the croutons crunchy and oil-free, and the tomatoes, black olives and Parmesan cheese complete the taste. The smoky flavor of the grilled chicken slices add the perfect touch to this already delicious salad recipe.

KFC Hotshots. I'm willing to bet my Tim Tam stash that you've already tried this. If you haven't, what's your excuse? KFC Hotshots, voted best dish of the year of 2002 by 2bU! readers, gives your good old chicken nuggets a swift kick in the butt.

Dulcinea's Choco Whipping. Chocolate lovers, here's another one for you. If you're the type who likes the icing more than the cake, Dulcinea's choco whipping was made with you in mind. Choco Whipping's ultra-creamy icing is thicker than the cake. Each slice is huge—you wouldn't be able to finish it alone unless you're really really hungry. It's heavenly. You'd find your taste buds looking for it again and again and again.

Popeye's chicken fingers with biscuits and syrup. This fast-food place is quickly gaining popularity because of the wide variety of dishes and the affordable price. The servings can be a bit bigger though.

Savory chicken. Still undisputed. You can buy the sauce by the bottle.

Yoshinoya's rice toppings. Affordable, filling and really, really good. Beef, chicken, pork or combination? It's your choice.

Filling Station's Iced Tea Smoothie. Sure, you've tried a gazillion variations of iced tea. But have you ever tried an iced tea smoothie? Filling Station's recipe is particularly good. It's an iced tea slush minus the sometimes bitter aftertaste of tea and, get this, minus the brain freeze. Fancy seeing Spidey upside down while slurping your slush, then Filling Station is the place to go. (You'd know what I mean when you get there.)

Little Asia's bacon-wrapped prawns. The soft "chewy-ness" of the plump prawns is the perfect gastronomical counterpoint to the crunchiness of the crisp bacon.

California Pizza Kitchen's BBQ Chicken Chopped Salad. The BBQ Chicken Chopped Salad (which I am enjoying as I write this article) is my favorite salad. And I know a lot of people have this in their favorite lists, too. "It bursts with 1,001 different sensations," Tim said. "It's the salad version of the *halo-halo*." True. This salad is made of a wide variety of ingredients—chopped lettuce, black beans, sweet corn, cilantro, basil, jicama, crispy corn tortilla strips, Monterey Jack cheese, chicken cubes (vegetarians can have it without the chicken), tomatoes, scallions, garden-herb ranch dressing and barbecue sauce—come together for a uniquely palatable experience. It's fresh and sweet and tangy and salty and crunchy and chewy and soft. I don't know anyone who doesn't like it.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

Prego in Alfiere!

Alfiere presents guest **Chef Giancarlo DiFrancesco** from the award winning **Prego Restaurant**, twice voted Best Italian Restaurant and Silver Excellence awardee. **Chef Giancarlo**, shares his culinary expertise as Westin's specialist in Italian cuisine from a variety of successful stints at the celebrated **Prego Restaurant**. Savor the robust and satisfying flavors of Italy as he gives it a fresh, new twist and whips up a medley of gourmet specialties. Come and experience **PREGO IN ALFIERE**. Buon Apetito!

ALFIÉRE

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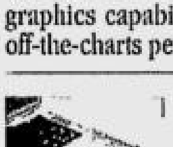

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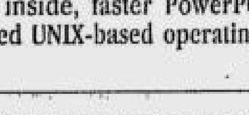

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How to survive 'hell month'

The school term is winding down, and before you can plan that frolic on the beach, you have to go through the stress of passing your academics

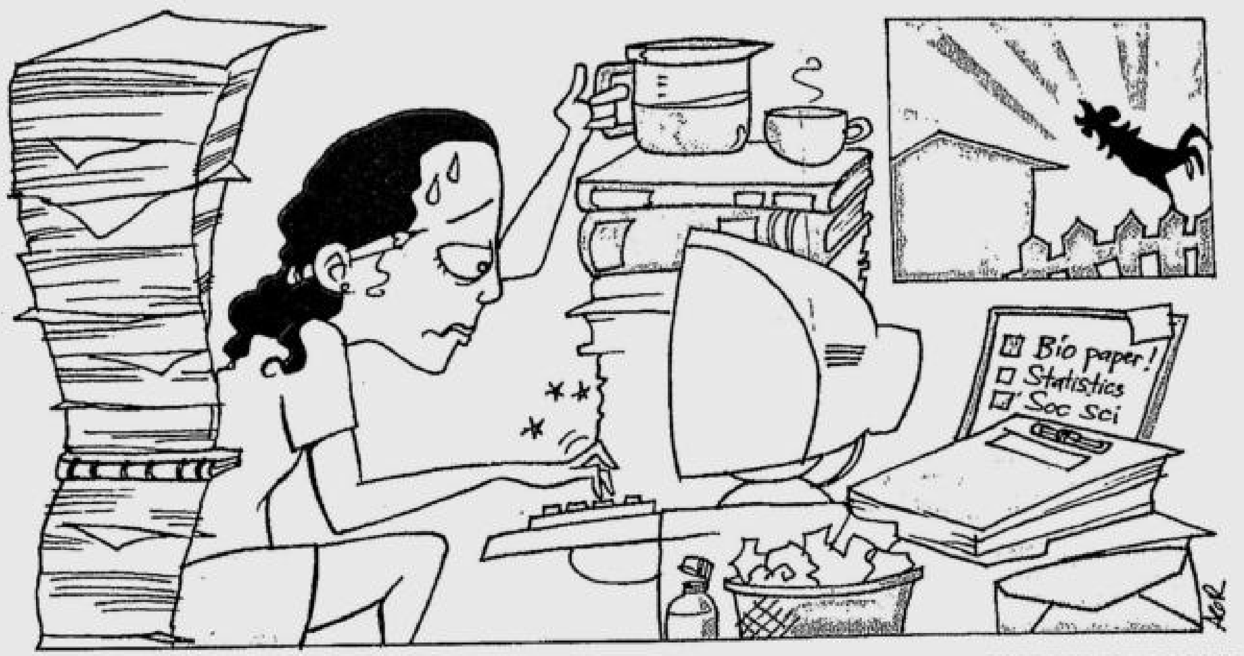


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

By Melissa Telan
2bU! Correspondent

AH yes, dear student, the school year is ending. But before planning that summer trip to the beach, you have to undergo one final hurdle: hell month.

Hell month translates to weeks of distress, agitation and nail-biting due to all the exams, papers, reports and oral defense you have to accomplish to finish the school term.

Your patience and sanity are tested during this period of time as you cope with the nerve-racking pressure of finishing so much work in so little time.

During hell month, coffee becomes a staple, eye bags become part of cosmetics, and acne starts popping uncontrollably on the face.

Times like these bring out the worst in people, so much so that even the gentlest person you know transforms all of a sudden into a cranky ogre.

Although there is no getting past hell month, here is a guide on how to get through it in one piece:

There is no getting around studying. Some people believe that they can get by with just listening to their professor during class time. However, to fully understand the lesson (and getting high marks at that), students must allot some extra studying time on their own.

So have your own study corner. Having a permanent corner would induce you to studying. Your nook should be well-lighted, uncluttered, comfy and as quiet as possible. It should also have as little distraction as possible. This means that cell phones should be muted and magazines should be kept at bay. When you can help it, don't take phone calls until you are done with your lessons.

Study regularly. Having a study corner is effective only if you spend time in it at a specific time each day. Consider study time sacred. Before you know it, study has already become a habit.

Stop cramming. Most students seem to live by the motto, "Why do it today, when I can do it tomorrow?" These students get a rush out of beating the clock and submitting their work, although sloppily done, on time. During an exam, they wait until the very last minute before hitting the books, and when that last minute arrives, they don't sleep a wink. Later on, they complain how little sleep they get. Procrastinating during normal times is bad—during hell month it is a nightmare. Perennial crammers should learn how to maximize time and use it wisely. If they won't do it for their grades, they should do it for their health.

Get sufficient sleep. During hell month, sleeping seems a nuisance, a waste of precious time. It is then tempting to forego sleep in order to finish reading for that test tomorrow and writing that term paper due in three days. However, sleeping only two or three hours a day may spell disaster. Losing sleep over studying may get you sick. It may spoil your concentration during a test, or worse you not make it to the test at all. This brings us to the next lesson…

Make sure you make it to the exam. This seems a silly advice, but some people oversleep because they were too tired cramming the night before. Take the case of my friend Liz last semester, who spent all night studying for her 7:30 history finals only to wake up at 9 a.m. and miss the exam entirely.

Make sure you get the exam time correctly. A classmate of mine thought that his oral exam was due 7 p.m. He went to the venue an hour before since he didn't want to be late. Eventually his time came but the teacher did not call him in. Soon he found out, in horror, that his oral exams had been due 7 that morning. He was not allowed to make up.

Study first the most difficult lessons, and then proceed to the easier ones. When you have two or more exams for the next day, study the more difficult lesson before proceeding to the next. In that way, even if you lack time studying for the easier subjects, you have at least acquainted yourself with the more difficult subject.

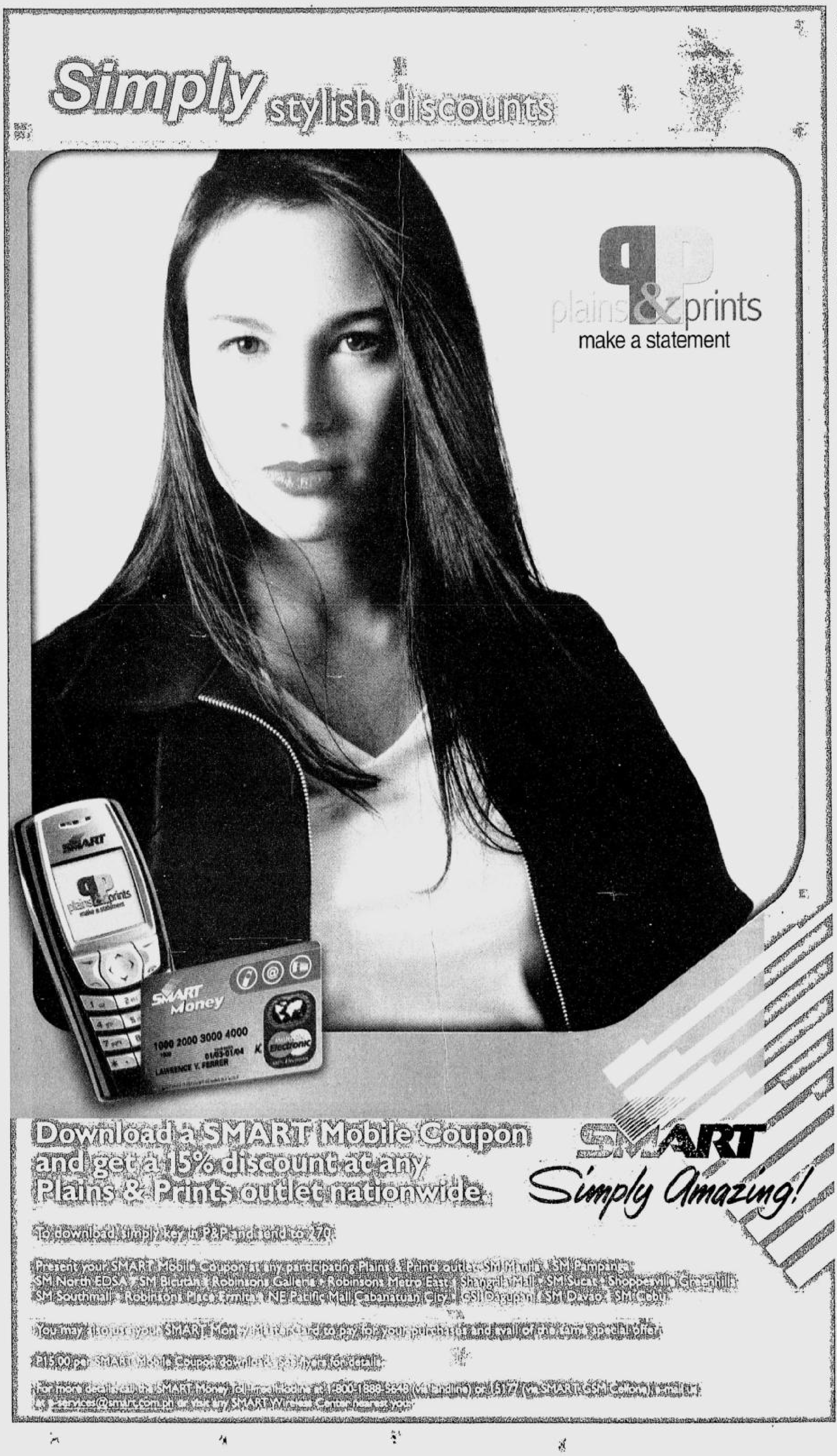
Join study groups. Such groups are effective, just as long as they are not mere chat groups on the latest episode of "Sex and the City."

Before going to a study group, make sure you have studied the lesson thoroughly on your own. The study group should serve only as a review group and as support to clarify some concepts you don't understand.

Stay healthy. If you notice, most students get sick during exams time. Colds and fever are plentiful during hell month because of stress, poor eating habits and lack of sleep. It is imperative then to stay healthy during hell month. This means you have to eat well and exercise to keep fit, improve your concentration and minimize stress. You should also take vitamins regularly.

Reward yourself. You are not a machine that can work 24/7 and not have a break. Reward yourself for every milestone you have accomplished. If you have finished studying for that Theology finals, for instance, perhaps you can pamper yourself by reading a good book or getting a pedicure. Remember, every little task you finish leads you one step closer to that much awaited summer vacation on the beach.

E-mail the author at melissatelan@yahoo.com



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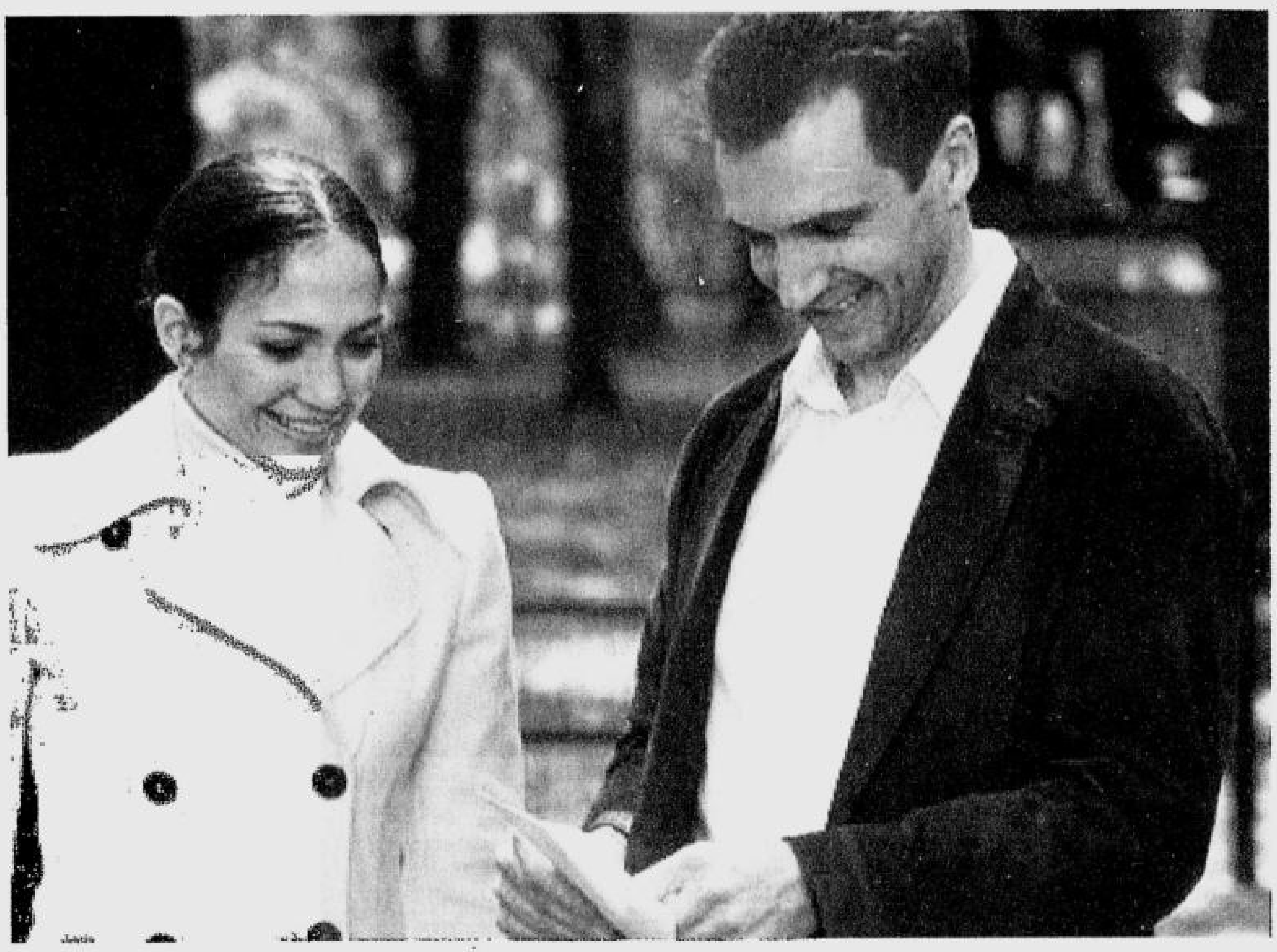

Lukewarm reviews notwithstanding, Fiennes welcomed the chance to shift acting gears

JENNIFER Lopez and Ralph Fiennes star in "Maid in Manhattan."

Ralph Fiennes is funny bone—J.Lo

By Alexis L. Loinaz
Contributor

THE WAY Ralph Fiennes described it, it was a surreal evening straight out of a Fellini film.

Last July, Fiennes was shooting the romantic comedy "Maid in Manhattan" with Jennifer Lopez outside New York City's grand Metropolitan Museum of Art. "The front of the Met was lit beautifully, like a great palace," Fiennes told the INQUIRER at a hotel in New York, where he was promoting the film. "And there had been a concert at [nearby] Central Park."

As the two filmed a scene where Lopez fled the museum in a stunning Bob Mackie gown—Fiennes yearningly trailing her—the concertgoers gathered, mob-like, outside. "The crowd saw the film set up and they saw her and so they all stopped and started screaming, 'Jennifer! J.Lo! J.Lo!'" he recalled, dumbfounded. "And she was standing—like it was something out of the '30s—looking amazing and the wind taking her skirt. It was like the Fellini films, and I was Marcello Mastroianni behind her."

There was one thing he didn't hear the crowd scream: his name. "I listened," he said, laughing. "But I didn't hear it."

If Fiennes seems like an odd sideshow in J.Lo's flashbulb-popping, name-screaming freak circus, it's because he is. The Shakespeare-trained British actor, famous for his intense dramatic performances, is hardly a person who would be at the center of a mob frenzy, much less a romantic comedy. Yet he is co-starring in his first with mob-maven Lopez.

Something lighter

"I guess after a while of doing all these characters who've got terrible, tortured, angst-filled lives, I wanted to do something a little lighter," said the 41-year-old actor. "I thought that something light and simple would actually be a challenge for me to do."

In a twist on the oft-told Cinderella story, "Maid in Manhattan" has Fiennes as a politician who mistakes Lopez's hotel-maid character for a high-society sophisticate. Although he's smitten, the upstairs-downstairs romance takes a few detours on the way to Happily Ever After.

The airy crowd pleaser is eons away from Fiennes' past films, particularly "The English Patient" and "The End of the Affair" which showcased his adeptness at playing doomed romantic leads. Add to these his career-making turn as a vile Nazi in 1993's "Schindler's List," and you've got the most unlikely genre-hopping actor this side of Adam Sandler in "Punch-Drunk Love."

"I came thinking, Christ, I don't know this thing called romantic comedy," Fiennes said. "It all depends on whom you're working with. You want to feel that there's good give-and-take, and you're batting the tennis ball back and forth."

Lopez proved to be a good batting partner. The actress, who cemented her bankability as a romantic lead in the 2001 hit "The Wedding Planner," was a key factor in Fiennes' decision to accept the part. "She's incredibly easy to work with, very spontaneous and has a great comic sensibility," he

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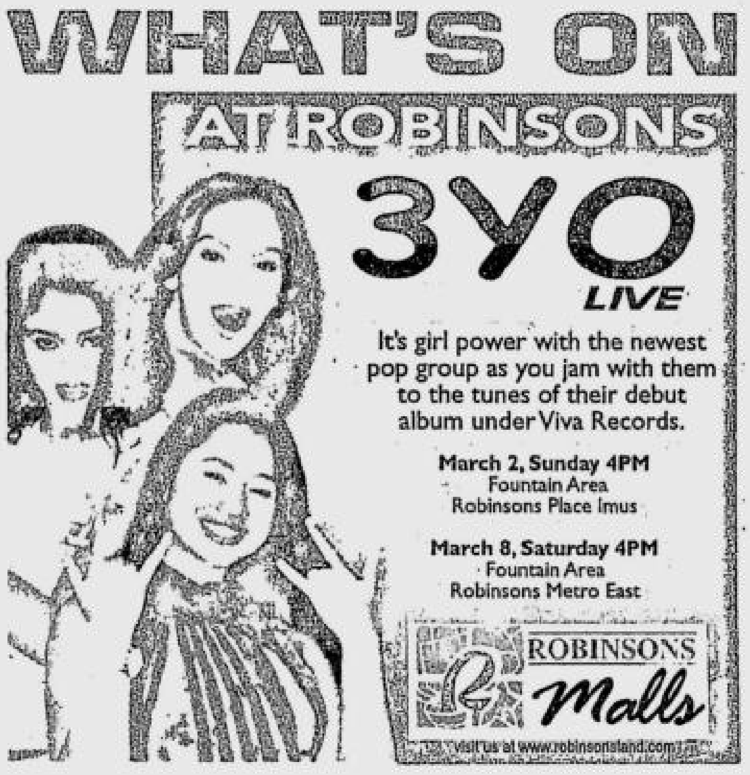

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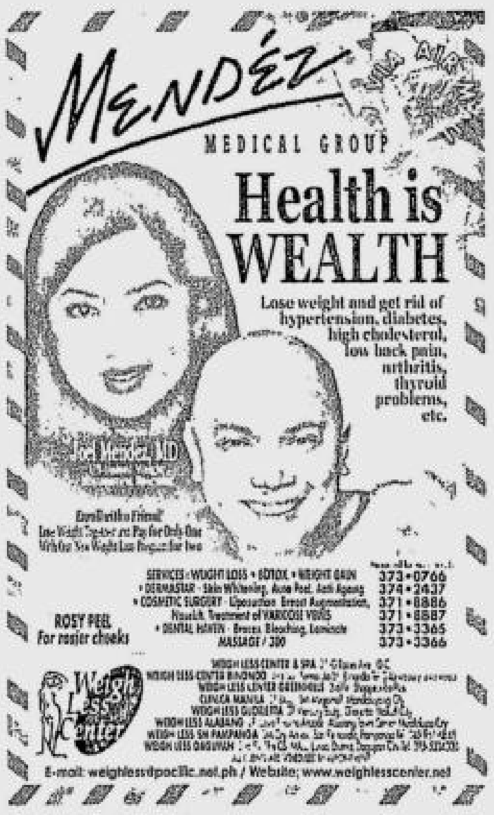

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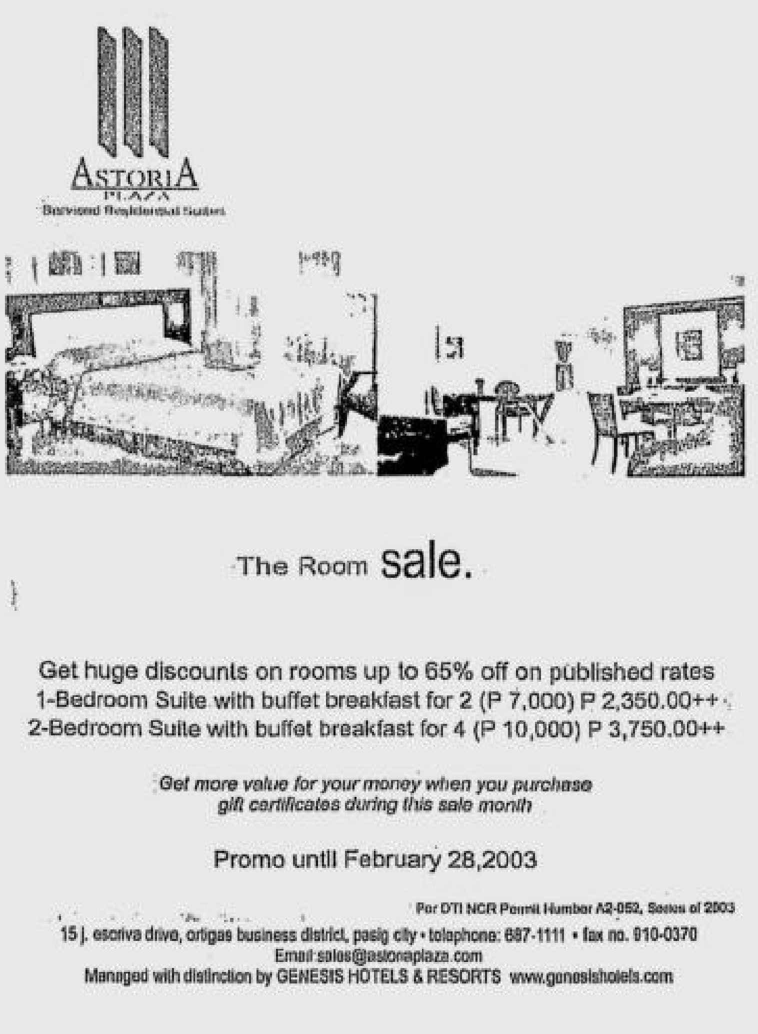

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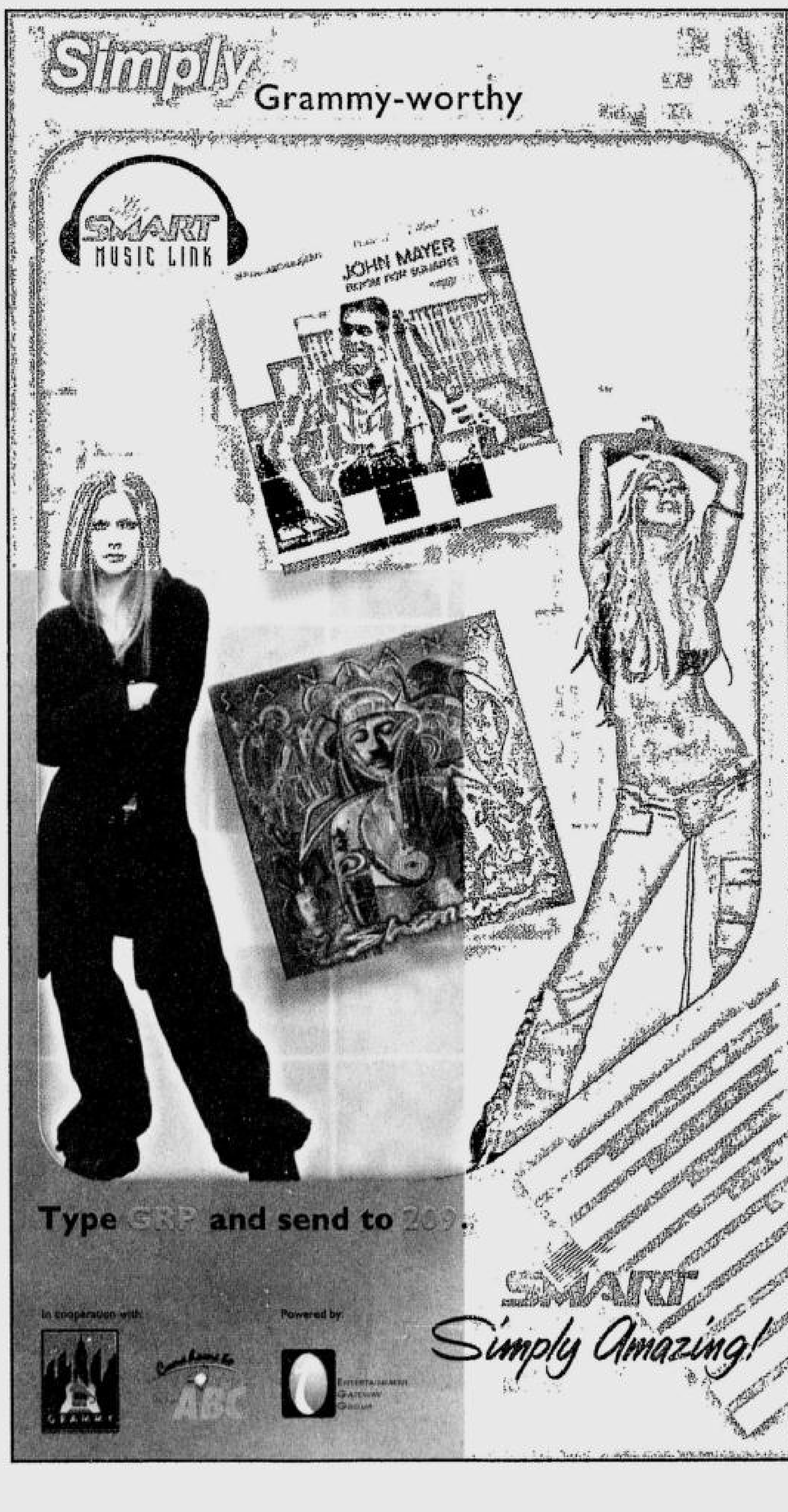

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Cebu Daily News flies high at 5!

PDI chairman of the board Marixi Prieto and Dennis Valdes, president of Inquirer Publications, Inc.: The goal is to be the no. 1 choice of readers.

IT TAKES five fingers to make a hand, five voices to complete a choir, five points to draw star.

To mark five significant years in its growth, **Cebu Daily News** went all out in throwing an elegant and celebratory bash last February 6 at the Cebu City Marriott Grand Ballroom.

"Here's to the next five years!" said President **Dennis O. Valdes** of Inquirer Publications, Inc. in a toast that capped his bold promise to make Cebu Daily News no. 1 not just in Cebu but the entire Visayas as well.

That goal is made all the more reachable with a hefty investment in new computers and Tera, a digital publishing system used by world class publications. The technology also benefits sister publication Bandera, which launched its Visayas edition a few days earlier.

The appreciation cocktails dubbed "High Five" rolled out a big thank you for its advertisers, newspaper dealers, news sources, readers and other supporters.

Top executives from the **Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI)** led by Chairman of the Board **Marixi R. Prieto** and President **Sandy Prieto-Romualdez** flew in from Manila for the birthday bash.

No lengthy speeches, just the succinct remarks of Valdes and Editor in Chief **Thea C. Riñen** followed by awards for outstanding editorial staff members and business partners.

The paper's growth is also a testament to the support of smart advertisers. The three biggest malls in Metro Cebu topped the list. On hand to receive heartfelt thank you's from CDN were Margaret Ang and Edward Gaisano of Metro Gaisano Ayala, SM City Cebu's **Marissa Fernan**, and **Ma. Christina Angan** of Cebu Holdings Inc./ Ayala Center Cebu.

Other leading advertisers were also awarded plaques. These are University of Cebu, Southwestern University, the Visayan Electric Company, National Power Corp., and Euoropa Delicatessen.

Major news dealers who continue to push distribution of **CDN** throughout Cebu and neighboring provinces were also recognized. The top three newspaper dealers were **Danny Ybañez, Randy Robles** and **Jorge Villanueva** represented by son **Jairus**.

Advertising agencies who contributed significantly to the paper's growth were similarly feted. Top three agencies were Studio 7 represented by **Jing and Homer Gauna, Vicki and Zen Pastoriza** of C.A.M.P. Cebu, **Lilu Aliño** of Creatron Ads and **Ana Marie Conejero** of Graphic FX.

The party also drew personalities who have landed on the front pages—**Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña** and wife **Margot, Vice Mayor Michael Rama, Councilor Jack Jakosalem, Region 7 Presidential Assistant Antonio Oppus** and **Presidential Liaison Officer Bert Emphasis**.

Adding glitter to the event were **Michel and Amparito Lhuillier, Teresing Mendezona, Joseph Gaisano** of White Gold, **WGA's Bob Gothong** with wife **Joy**, Freeman/Star columnist **Valeriano "Bobit" Avila**, and **Jake Marques**.

In keeping with cutting-edge information technology the Cebu Daily News is known for, digital toys were raffled off—a Canon digital camera, MMS cellphones from SMART Communications and Palm Zire units from Microwarehouse. ■

CDN Privilege Card

Clariza Carpio, Advertizing Supervisor and Daphne Santos, IPI Marketing Manager

AS A SPECIAL treat for loyal **Cebu Daily News** readers, one-year subscribers will be given a **CDN Privilege Card**. The card gives discounts from 5 to 50% in select Cebu establishments.

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Read more about it in **CDN** where the directory gets weekly updates.

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Cebu City Rep. Raul del Mar and CDN Editor in Chief Thea Riñen

Sandy Prieto-Romualdez with Cebu AD Agency Owners - Vicki & Zen Pastoriza (CAMP), White Gold's Joseph Gaisano, Jing Gauna (Studio 7), Lilu Aliño (Creatron Ads), Anne Marie Conejero (Graphix FX), Homer Gauna, Pepito Olarte & Rene Renoso (PDI)

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Lucky Vicki Pastoriza (center) of CAMP Cebu ad agency wins a cellphone in the raffle from SMART's Ma. Jane Paredes and Sally Flores-Aldaba

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Ralph Fiennes is funny bone–J.Lo

From page D1

said. "She was great to work with like that."

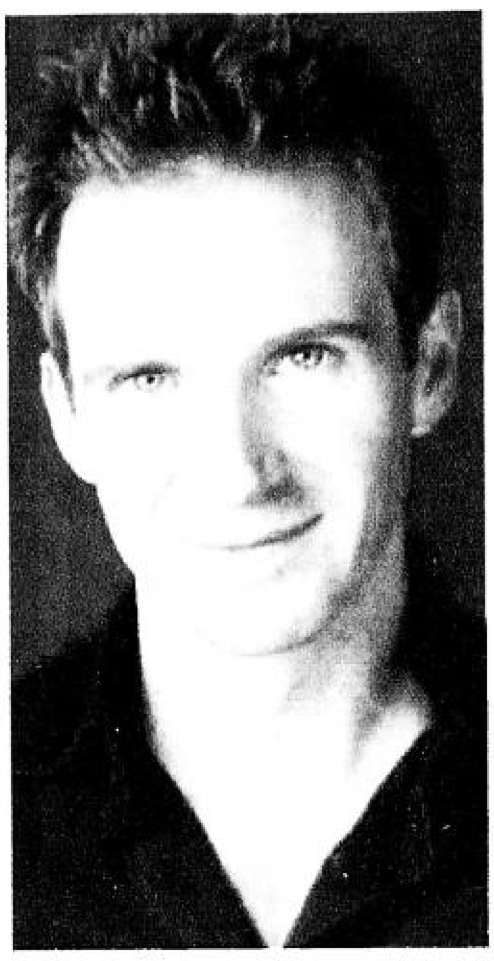
Top of the list

Actually, it was Lopez who suggested casting Fiennes. Co-producer Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas said he was always at the top of their list. "Ralph was a choice we made specifically because he hasn't done [romantic comedy] before," she said. "And we were stunned that he said yes. But it turns out he loves romantic comedy. He loved 'Roman Holiday.'"

Fiennes wasn't the only one feeling his way around. Director Wayne Wang, who first hit Hollywood pay dirt 10 years ago with the multigenerational tearjerker "The Joy Luck Club," was also new to the genre. "I met with Ralph and he said, 'I don't know anything about romantic comedies,'" Wang said. "And I go, I don't either. And so that's how we started."

From there, Wang and Fiennes worked to develop a buoyant approach to the script. "The word 'comedy' gets misused," the actor said. "Some people think it just means laughter. It also means a lightness of touch and an inherent wit and irony in what you're doing."

Critical reaction, however, to Fiennes' maiden excursion into Hugh-Grant territory, has been tepid at best. Most film reviewers, seemingly shell-shocked that Fiennes' well-pedigreed name actually appears next to that of a woman notorious for flashing flesh, say the actor was miscast.



"I THOUGHT that something light and simple would actually be a challenge for me to do."

Lukewarm reviews notwithstanding, Fiennes welcomed the chance to shift acting gears. Before shooting "Maid in Manhattan," he played a pair of deeply disturbed characters: a tattooed serial killer in the Hannibal Lecter prequel "Red Dragon" and a schizophrenic in the psychological drama "Spider."

"It was actually kind of a relief," Fiennes said of the change. "That part in 'Red Dragon' was something I felt I could take on. I knew the terrain of that sort of role. But it was a challenge to come to this... because the tone of this comedy is quite hard to get. I feel there's a sort of relaxation that's needed."

No brooding intensity

Indeed, the actor was looking quite relaxed. Dressed in plain black trousers and a black coat—his wrinkled white shirt looking like it was just pulled from a suitcase—Fiennes didn't have the brooding intensity one might expect from an actor known for playing tortured souls.

He sat calmly, casually. Unlike other interviewees who tended to fill every moment with chatter, he stayed silent after answering a question and took measured sips from his coffee cup.

Dealing coolly with the press was something Fiennes had become adept at after 10 years in the spotlight. Born in a small provincial town in Suffolk, England, he originally planned to be a painter. A fortuitous foray into school theater set the stage for a career that would take him from Britain's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art to the Royal National Theater to the Royal Shakespeare Company. (Four of his five siblings are also in show business, including actor Joseph Fiennes.)

After languishing in literate but little-seen movies such as 1992's "Wuthering Heights," Fiennes burst onto the scene in "Schindler's List," which earned him an Oscar nomination in 1994. Three years later he got a second nomination for playing a doomed lover in "The English Patient."

Despite his success in films, Fiennes regularly returns to the stage. In fact, Fiennes sported a mustache during the interview—a little character accoutrement for his role as Carl Jung in the London production of "The Talking Cure." He said live theater kept him... centered. "The stakes are very high in live performance, which I find quite grounding," he said. "There's nothing to save you. There's no retakes, no editing, no music to go over a dodgy moment. And I can only work off other people and the director."

Acting onstage, he said, also jolted him out of the celebrity la-la land he inadvertently found himself in, including the surreal-unreal-Fellini-esque moments of screaming J.Lo fans outside beautifully lit Manhattan museums.

"The danger is, if you are a successful actor or pop star or whatever, you get so much attention [that] your own universe is the end of the universe," Fiennes said. "You can easily be surrounded by people who only tell you good things. And so the smart, successful movie actors have a strong bullshit detector. I think it's important to keep that up."

E-mail the author at alexisloinaz@yahoo.com

UST Museum hosts inter-school chalk art contest

IN CELEBRATION of the National Arts Month, the University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences, the country's oldest museum, is holding the Thomasian Chalk Festival (TCF), the first ever inter-school chalk art competition, on Feb. 28.

TCF, which is open to college students in Metro Manila, will feature a visual art competition using colored chalks, live performances, bazaars and food fair.

Theme of the competition is "Our World In Colors." Contestants will convert streets into colorful temporary galleries.

Winners will receive cash prizes: P10,000, first place; P5,000, second; and P3,000, third.

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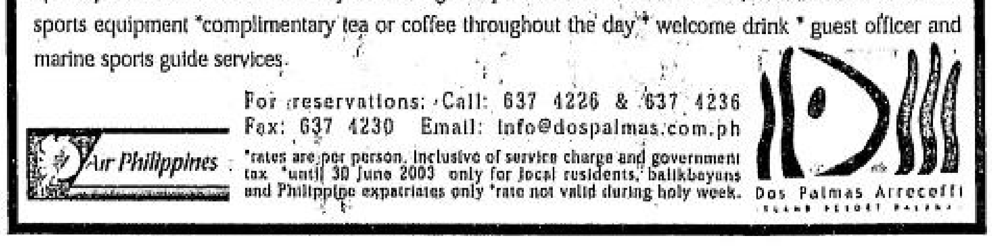

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Four years a 15-year-old

By Ruben Nepales
Contributor

BURBANK—It took Joseph Gordon-Levitt four years to finish dubbing the voice of Jim Hawkins, the 15-year-old solar surfing lead character in Disney's Oscar-nominated animated feature, "Treasure Planet."

"I started dubbing for the movie when I was 17," said Gordon-Levitt in an interview at the Disney Animation building, where a photo of Lea Salonga recording the "Mulan" theme song graces the lobby. "I'm 21 now. These movies take forever to make. It takes years and years. They're so carefully put together. I went into final sessions not even that long ago. You don't do anything for four months and then you go in for a couple of days."

Ron Clements and John Musker, the guys behind "Aladdin" and "The Little Mermaid," are once more at the helm of this movie, which is a space adventure version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic "Treasure Island."

How did he land the plum voice acting job in a big-budget Disney animation movie? "I auditioned for it like any other part," replied Gordon-Levitt, best known as Tommy Solomon in the acclaimed television sitcom "3rd Rock from the Sun." He was the tyke whose prayers were granted in the hit movie "Angels in the Outfield." He won a Young Star award from Hollywood Reporter magazine for his performance in that film.

"WHAT I want to do in my life is to engage people."

Not bad looking

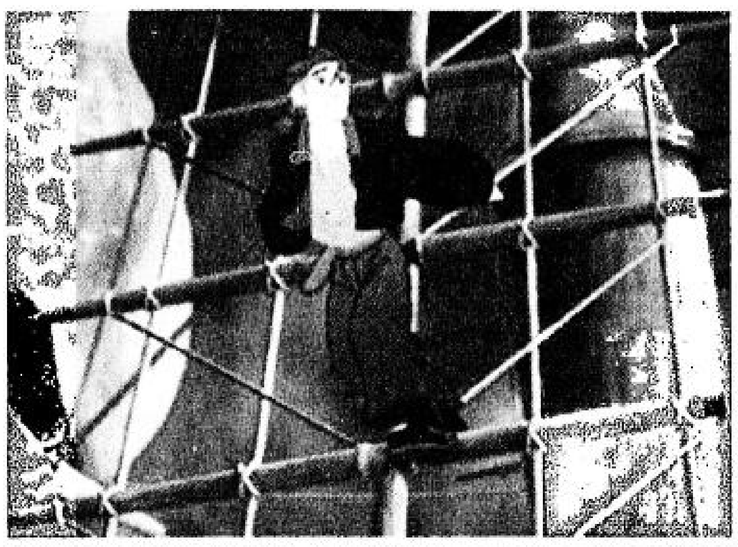
Gordon-Levitt added, "When they want a pretty face, they go someplace else. When they want someone who can speak..." His voice trailed off. He's not a bad-looking dude. This actor, who was Demi Moore's son in the movie "The Juror," sports long, curly black hair. This morning, he was dressed in a gray hooded sweater and vintage plaid pants.

Gordon-Levitt's voice must have changed over the four years that he was "speaking" for Jim Hawkins. "Yeah," confirmed the actor. "In later years, I'd go in and they'd say, you have to raise your voice."

"Treasure Planet" is Gordon-Levitt's first voice acting job. "It was totally different from acting in front of a camera," said the Los Angeles native whose movie debut, "A River Runs Through It," was directed by no less than Robert Redford. "You don't add your body or eyes. You are alone in the booth. It's hard. Then they cut it together.

"But what was really nice about doing this movie," he added, "is that you can try all sorts of ways of delivering your lines. The directors will try anything. For the scene where Jim Hawkins is riding around space on his solar surfer, they just told me, here's the scene—pretend you're on a solar surfer."

Did he identify with the wayward Jim Hawkins, who is not your typical goody-goody Disney character but a rather impetuous loner, a rebel adolescent angered by his father's desertion when he was a child?



"TREASURE Planet's" Jim Hawkins

THE 21-YEAR-OLD Gordon-Levitt started dubbing the Jim Hawkins character at age 17.

Jim Hawkins is not the typical goody-goody Disney character but a rather impetuous loner, a rebel adolescent

Extraordinary stuff

"Jim represents something that almost everybody can identify with at one point in their young lives," replied Gordon-Levitt who, as a child, was a regular guest on TV's "Roseanne." "There's some stuff about Jim that's extraordinary and he can't figure out how to do good things with it. He's misunderstood. He goes off, battles pirates, finds treasure and figures it out. It's kind of what we ought to do in our lives.

"I really hope that the kids read the book," he said. "Whether they read it before or after they see the movie is good. The movie and the book are different. The movie is inspired by the book but the book is really a sophisticated analysis of the military-like situation between the mutineers and the other characters."

Gordon-Levitt, who was clearly not your dense young actor, went on, "The book doesn't spend too much time on the emotions or the humanity of the people involved. The human aspect, on the other hand, is definitely the emphasis of the movie. I think the book and the movie are a really cool complement to each other. I hope they will be a great inspiration for all sorts of discussion between the parent and the child, to read the book and see the movie together."

How did he react on seeing a completed version of "Treasure Planet" after working on it for four long years? "It's lovely to hear my voice coming out of such a good-looking dude," he said with a smile.

Did he miss taping "3rd Rock from the Sun," which ended its long successful run in 2001?

"Ah, like, do you miss high school?" he threw back the question.

'High school' years

To the "No" reply from a journalist, Gordon-Levitt commented, "Those (the years he was on '3rd Rock') were my high school years. They didn't totally suck. You learn everything you know in high school. I will always love that show."

Then he declared, "But I never really want to be on TV again."

It was a bold statement from such a young actor. "Why?" we asked.

"Because you're selling commercials. You can express yourself, get across a message but in the end, you're just selling ads. The people who make the ads are the ones who decide what you're going to do. That doesn't interest me. I'm not interested in promoting their agenda."

Asked to elaborate, he added, "What I want to do in my life is to engage people. Have them feel things and think about them. TV is kind of opposite of that. It wants to sell you things. I'm not interested in that."

Someone asked a "serious" journalistic query: Will there be a "Treasure Planet" PlayStation game?

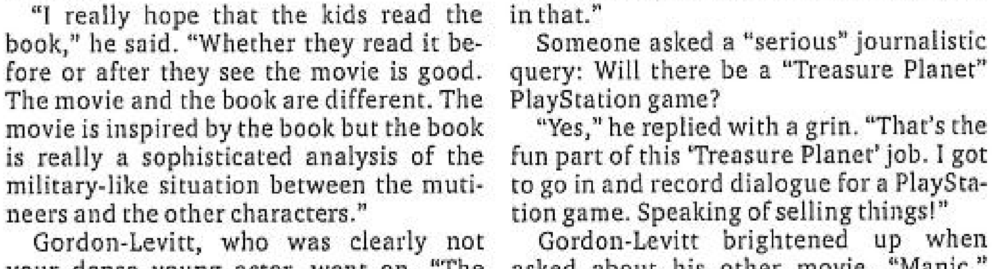
"Yes," he replied with a grin. "That's the fun part of this 'Treasure Planet' job. I got to go in and record dialogue for a PlayStation game. Speaking of selling things!"

Gordon-Levitt brightened up when asked about his other movie, "Manic," which created a buzz in the prestigious Sundance Film Festival two years ago. The film, reportedly scheduled to be shown in the United States this spring, was described as a sort of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" for troubled teens (but without an evil nurse) where kids with violent, suicidal or other anti-social tendencies went to be rehabilitated."

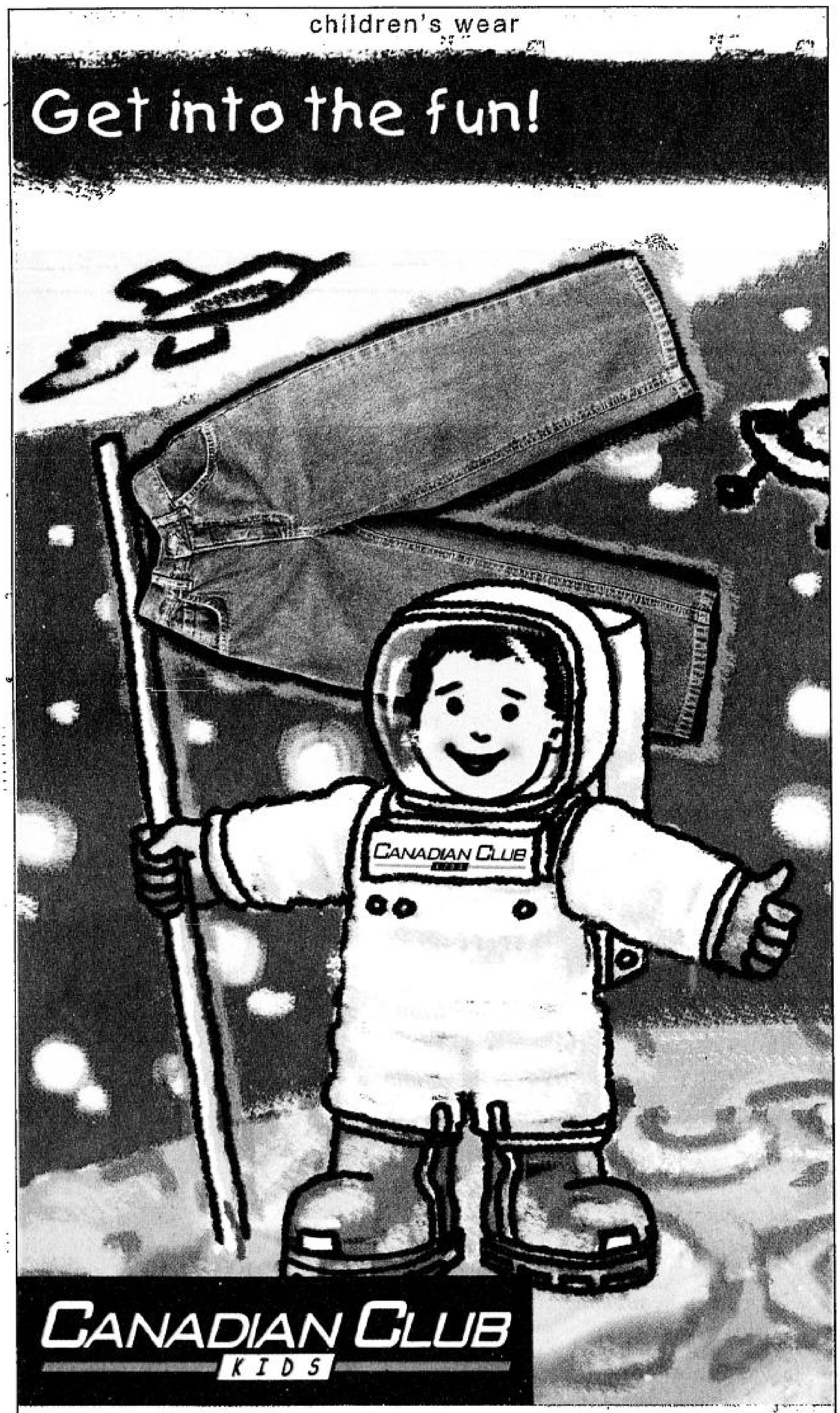
The actor volunteered, "It's an independent movie, with a very small budget and shot on digital cameras. Don Cheadle is in it. I'm in it. And so is Zooey Deschanel. It's not a Disney movie. But it shows how universal things are. It addresses themes like how to figure out who you are. As in real life, this movie's story doesn't wrap up so tidily in the end. It can be scary to watch a movie that won't let you turn away or won't let you just be okay. It will remind you that there's a lot of things going on that you don't necessarily want to be thinking about."

Any ambition to write or direct a movie? He took out a tiny digital camcorder and aimed it at the writers surrounding him. "I'm making a movie right now," he said.

Have you written the script? he was asked. "We're writing it right now," he muttered with a laugh.



THE VOICE and the character



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Luke Mijares in solo concert

LUKE Mijares will be "Just a Smile Away" in a concert at Sofah Restaurant on Feb. 28.

The concert is one in a series Mijares will be doing as a solo artist. He was front act in the recent Ronan Keating concert.

The Sofah Restaurant, where Mijares will perform, serves traditional Chinese dishes in avant-garde setting. It is located on J. Nakpil Street, Malate, Manila. Call Ana Santos at 524-1300 or 524-1311.

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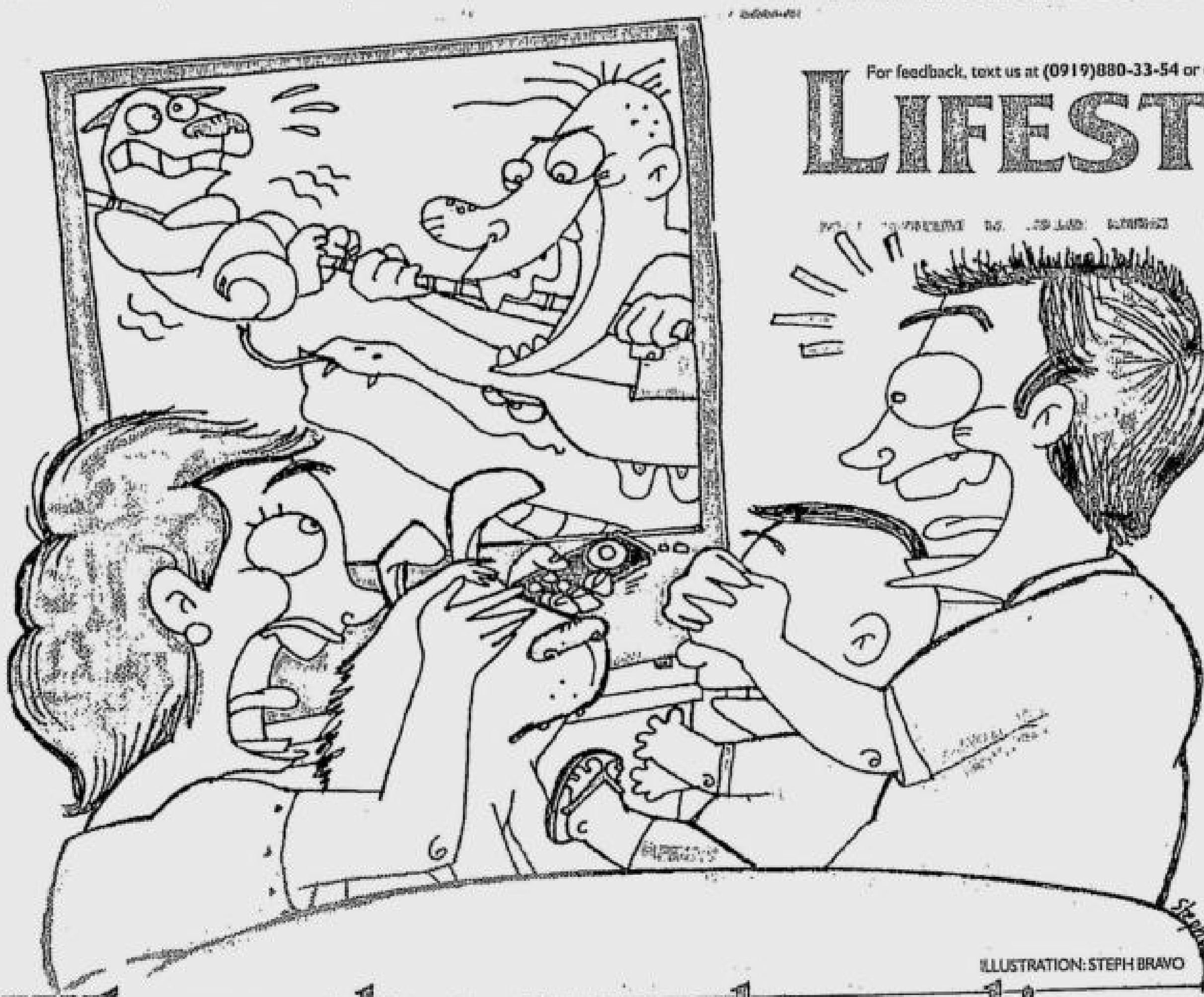

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

When the cruel media abet animal cruelty

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

> A TV program shows a man feeding a live dog to his python and the show's producer claims she knows her media ethics

IT STARTED with a frantic phone call from a doctor. Nita Lichauco, president of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), thought it was another just one of those calls. Instead, she was told about a teaser he just saw for the TV magazine show "Extra! Extra!": a puppy put into a cage with a python, the puppy's eyes filled with fear as it tried to run away from the snake's strikes, until the owner pushed the puppy with a bamboo stick, with a voice-over telling viewers to watch the show the next day, to get yet another glimpse of "extraordinary people."

PAWS jumped right into action, starting a text brigade among its members and their friends, urging people to call the show's producers to have the segment cut out.

At first the network denied the show would feature the snake; later it told Lichauco that it would edit the footage.

What was aired last Friday was a parental advisory disclaimer, then the footage showing the dog being shoved into the cage, and the man being interviewed as to why he fed the dog to his snake (he said that he once fed the snake kittens, then cats, and since the snake never seemed to be full, dogs).

"Extra! Extra!" claimed it did not support cruelty to animals, and that it was sad that the snake owners' neighbors didn't know that he was violating Republic Act 8485, which is the Animal Welfare Act.

TV circus

"We don't go out and protest animal cruelty being shown if it is handled correctly for humane education purposes," Anna Hashim-Cabrera of PAWS says. "The treatment was circus-like. The program is known for its light and entertaining format... it trivialized animal terror and suffering into some kind of curiosity."

The program's producers said it was trying to create awareness about the issue. According to them, the story was intended to show a man who owned a 27-foot 150 kg python and other snakes as pets. When they found out that the man fed his snake dogs, the producers supposedly urged the man to stop, since it is against the law. According to the owner, his snake got sick of eating chickens and cats. "Then the snake found a dog in the backyard—the snake could get out of the cage when it was still small—and ate it. [The owner] noticed that the snake was healthier after that. The owner only feeds the snake a dog once a month," the show's producer said. "And the snake only eats virgin dogs." She also claimed that neighbors would give the owner dogs to feed the reptile.

The producers said that after they told the owner that he was violating the law, he stopped the practice.

The footage was shot late in January in Bohol. The producers said they had been aware of the Animal Welfare Act 8485. But in the segment, not once was the snake owner confronted about his practice and the law that prohibited it.

Tourist attraction

What made the man "extraordinary," according to the producer, was that he "had a snake as a pet."

"[The owner] wanted to remove the notion

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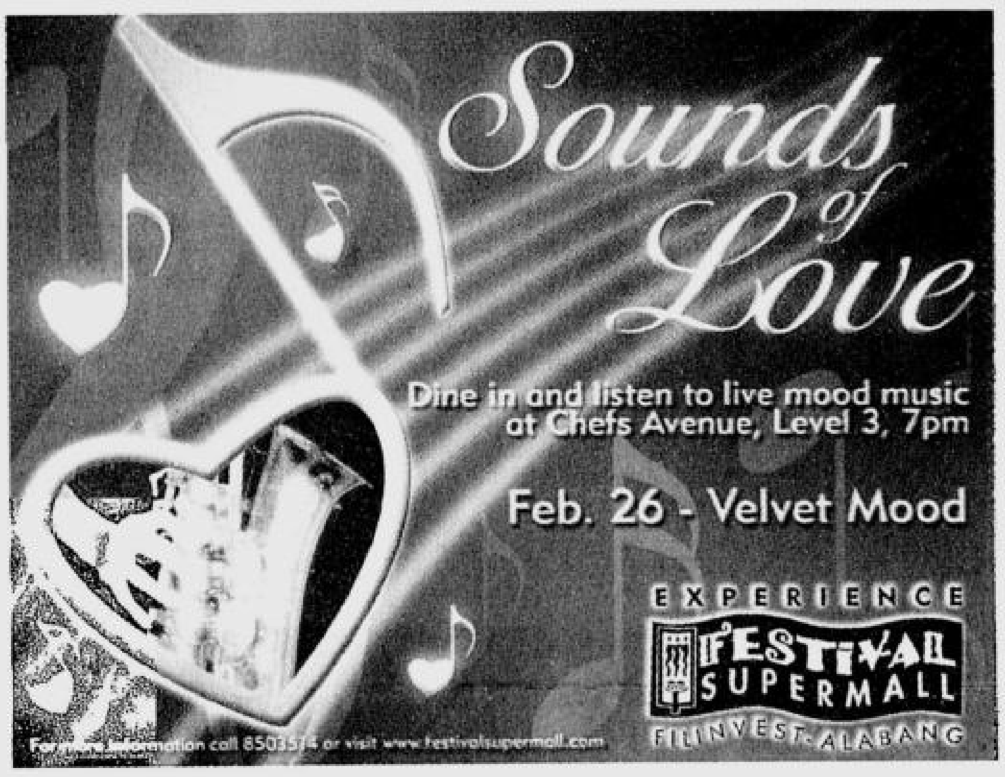
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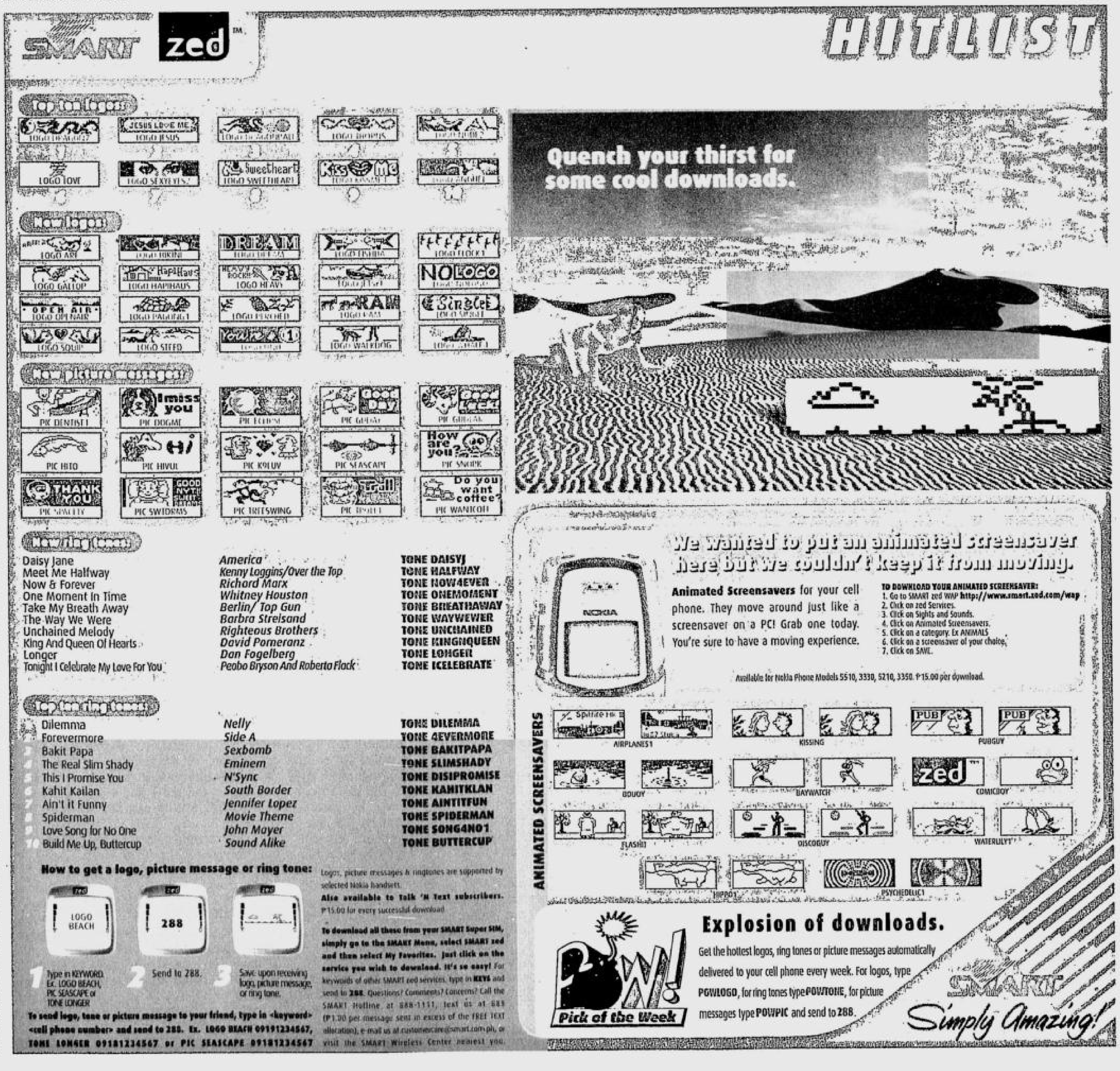
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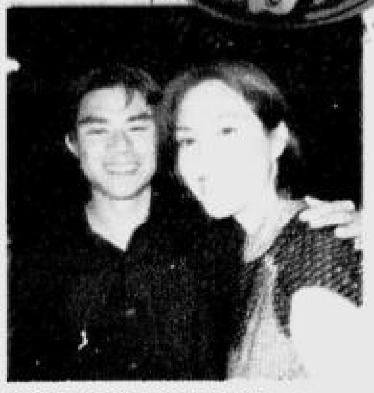
BIRTHDAY BOYS. Philip Cruz and Marcel Crespo


AVANT GUARDIAN. Gippy Tantoco and Xeng Zulueta

YOGA STRUCTURE. Jonjon Rufino and Dan Lichauco

YIN AND YANG. Lex Ledesma and Tina Tinio at Courtyard

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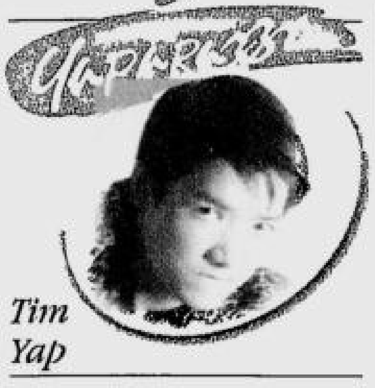
U PARTY! Yaparazzi with U designer Hindy Tantoco

TURN IT ON! Orosa-phile DJ Montano and Tina P

Birthday suite



Tim Yap

You can't avoid birthday bashes. Happily they've become so enjoyable that they defy time's gravity

PHOTOS: TIM YAP

WE JUST can't get enough of birthday parties. Once somebody invites you to her birthday, you just can't say no. I have a friend who dumped her boyfriend because he didn't show up at her party. (Just shows what kind of friends I have.)

Others make it a whole party season, celebrating daily for the whole week like there's no next year. "I love it—I can get away with everything. It's my birthday!" said a well-loved club owner. "I had three parties this year and I couldn't find the time and energy to text friends to go anymore!" said yet another in-demand partyphile.

Others, to avoid unnecessary stress and pressure, even throw their parties late. Or they just say "no" to the countless group birthday bashes happening all over town.

I don't blame them—I once celebrated my own birthday two months late.

Another year marks a turning point in one's life. This week's party hop goes from private dinners to club shebangs to band showdowns.

"It" boys

My first hop was at **Philip Cruz III**'s mod Japanese party at Yaku resto inside Sommerset Hotel. Flavored martinis shared the bar with sake as guests feasted on sushi and maki.

The scene's latest "it" boy, Philip was having a ball, as girls swarmed around the dashing dandy.

The photographer clicked away at the partyphiles present, a smattering of young society scene mainstays and Philip's admirers and friends.

From there, I hopped to Aruba in Libis. "Inviting you all to the extinction of my youth..." read the invite to MYX VJ **Franco Mabanta**'s birthday—and he just turned 20.

This Atenean celebrated his natal day in a big way, inviting all his Blue Eagle friends, celebrities and scenesters from the fashion and music scene.

Aside from being a veejay and sought-after commercial model known for his offbeat humor, he added another feather in his cap by being a talent manager to the all-male vocal group Akafellas.

Courtyard master

DJ Montano just turned a year younger. While other people throw parties to mark their b-dates, DJ chooses to open up restaurants.

The latest addition to his growing roster of hipper than hip hot spots (after Raj and Acquario) is Courtyard Cuisine Chinoise.

An intimate dinner for a dozen friends had DJ preparing a fete worthy of an emperor. A flair for eastern elan had DJ whip up China doll martinis plus an assortment of cold cuts from seaweed to drunken chicken to fried pork brain (yummy, really!) and chili prawns as starters.

BLOW IT. Marcel Crespo and Tina Pamintuan

CHI CHI CHINOISERIE. Dining at Courtyard exudes eastern elan

MY DAREDEVIL. Victor Consunji and Celine Lopez in a Tippi Ocampo feathered dress

WHERELSE mistress Japs Treopaldo

COURTYARD master DJ Montano

His floral centerpieces of yin-yang white and red roses on dimsum baskets were lavishly charming.

More exotic dishes followed. Filling the room were lively banter and animated laughter. Recipes were culled from DJ's latest trip to Shanghai. They were also from the genius of a Chinese chef and yet another expert from the kitchen of a popular Chinoise resto fit for presidents.

The new resto's look is modern and opulent, with rich brocade table cloths, a large aquarium of gold fishes on the first floor, and a fab balcony on the second, which overlooks the whole Orosa strip.

Being at Courtyard gives a whole new meaning to chi-chi chinoiserie.

Simplify, simplify

Last stop was Wherelse, where owner Marcel Crespo was having the time of his life.

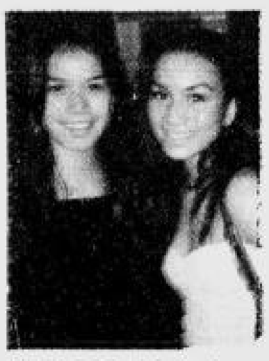
"Five star, five star!" screamed the partyphiles on the dance floor as someone popped bubbly for everyone to toast to Crespo's natal day.

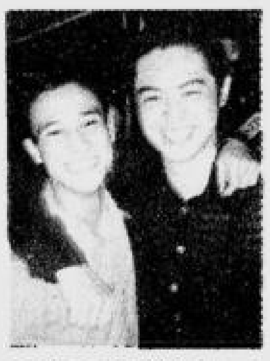
"I feel so good that I'm not as stuck-up as before," a partyphile said. "Before I wouldn't hang out with these guys—I thought they were sketchy. I was proven wrong—they're great people, and now I'm hanging out with them."

Yup, the scene is full of people who indulge in intrigue and false first impressions, it always pays to give people a chance. You'll never know who you'll meet and be close to next time.

As for those who indulge in "daily delilah," wallow in misery and thrive in other people's sorrows, they're just not worth spending time for.

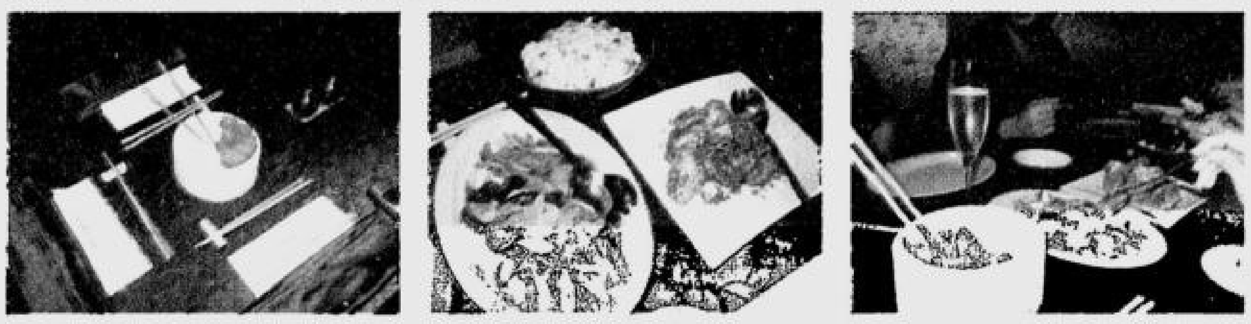
Just drop them. "Simplify, simplify, simplify." I always tell my friends. Those who get it, win. And those who don't just have to try harder.


UPCLOSE with Jessica and Steph Kienle


ARUBA! Khalil Kaimo and Franco Mabanta

BBC! Mike Constantino and Kara Tolentino

WINK, WINK! Paula Nocom, Pia Rojas, Sigrid Villamil and Marica Lim


COURTYARD TREATS. Soup No. 5, fried pork brain, and other exotic Chinoise delicacies to salivate over

FOUR PLAY. Dale Villar, birthday boy Philip Cruz, Donna Tumacder and JM Rodriguez

PEACE, BROS! Miggy Matute, Philip Cruz, Migs Naguiat, Gabe Arenas and David Esteban

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Easiest way to get out of a style rut

Lora Gabol

WITH the sudden overload of college graduation pictures from friends, I "organized" a grad pic album putting my dearest buddies' pictures beside their high school graduation photos.

I realized a few things, like you really find your true friends in high school, and I was lucky to have been able to keep them. Moreover, four years since high school, I am no longer the naïve 15-year-old I was. I am OLD but half of my friends apparently still look exactly like they did before going to college.

It is said that change is the only constant thing in the world. Some, apparently, never embraced this fact. Or maybe, with all the changes in the world, they had to keep at least one thing constant—their looks, which should explain the same shoulder-length, blow-dried-to-death hairstyle in both high school and college portraits.

Changing your 'do is probably the easiest way to get out of a style rut. Learn from the mothers of reinvention—Cher and Madonna, who preach that changing your look can lead to near-immortality and iconoclastic status.

I picked the brains of trusted stylists and unearthed some fresh options.

For the brave and daring

Get short-y! Go for a cute pixie or flippy wisps.

Poster girls: Halle Berry, Mylene Dizon

Perfect for: girls with small faces and fabulous bone structure as longer hair could overpower delicate features. If you have fuller cheeks or prominent jawline, ask the stylist to downplay these features. If he's good, he'd suggest a length to go with your facial structure.

The cut: Forget cutting by numbers. The most flattering styles are asymmetrical and piece-y. Your stylist could use a razor for a lighter, feathery effect, and to avoid the "I-just-had-a-haircut" look. Some say that using a razor could damage hair, so ask if you can achieve the same effect by snipping from a perpendicular angle. Adding fringes here and there flatters rounder face shapes.

Styling tips: The style is pretty much wash-and-wear, but make sure your hair is dry before stepping out. Use a blowdrier in a cool setting, or an electric fan if you're really in a rush. Scrunch layers for volume. Apply a dollop of hair wax like L'Oreal Out Of Bed Putty to separate pieces for an edgy look.

For stylish versatility

A mid-length chop works well for girls who want a thousand and one styling options for their hair. This length has the swingy quality of a bob, but is long enough to tie back.

Poster girls: Pia Guanio, Charlene Gonzales, Kelly Rowland

Perfect for: just about any face shape. This cut is almost error-proof!

The cut: Go for the "disconnection" technique (ask the stylist to demonstrate). You end up with a slight undercut. The lower layers are cut shorter, so the top layers seem lighter and wispier. This is especially great for girls with thick hair. Opt for the modern shag, with fringes or layers to frame the face. You get a fun, sassy, low-maintenance, non-retro style.

Styling tips: No need for complicated styling. Bend over and simply run your fingers through your hair while blowdrying. A few touches of L'Oreal Remix will set the style. The amazing product also allows you to change styles in the middle of the day, as hair stays flexible, not stiff. The result? A slightly disheveled but uber-sexy look.

Forget rebonding! Not only will it cost you, you also run the risk of damaging your hair no matter how mild the formula is supposed to be. If your genes gave you wavy or curly hair, work with, not against, it. Besides, sultry waves are now the hottest thing on and off the runway.

Poster girls: Calista Flockhart, Kate Hudson, Norah Jones

Perfect for: just about anyone who dares to experiment. Even straight-haired gals are going wavy with the help of curling irons and products. It's just a matter of attitude, baby!

The cut: If you're a natural curlytop, break the pouf with layers. One length will make your hair seem heavy. Be careful, though, not to make the layers too short or too many. Ask your stylist what would be most flattering given your hair condition. Also, remember that hair care is an absolute must where curls are concerned. Condition in the shower and after (use a leave-on formula) to protect and prevent frizzing.

Styling tips: Curly and wavy hair is always at its best without heat styling. Blowdrying adds volume, something this hair type obviously does not need. Air dry, instead, and apply just enough amount of hair product to hold curls in place (too much can weigh hair down). For straight hair, use a curl amplifier (like Citre Shine Curling Balm) before drying hair with fingers. Use Velcro rollers (the smaller the size, the tighter the curl) and leave them on for twenty minutes. If you're in a rush, use a curling iron. Don't scrimp on hair protection, though. Spritz on St. Ives Hair Repair Split Mender before the process.

In a changing world, the one thing many people keep constant seems to be their hair

Fringe benefits

I'm not talking about second-grade apple-cut bangs we all used to have (or was it just me?). These days, bangs are all grown up.

Poster girls: Penelope Cruz, Renee Zellweger, Lucy Torres-Gomez

Perfect for: girls who want to keep their long hair but want a touch of pizzazz to everyday style. Asymmetric bangs are best for girls with high foreheads, but almost anyone can have the style. Stay away from too-blunt bangs unless you have Angel Aquino's cheekbones.

The cut: Ask the stylist to lop off the front layer until it grazes the brow, then start from there. The operative word is asymmetric. Some face shapes will require longer fringes, others shorter. Consult the stylist for the best fringe for you.

Styling tips: To keep bangs in place, work a little Wellaform Classic Hairdressing cream through hair. This affordable product is the answer to almost every hair problem imaginable.

Visit my fave salons for a consultation and styling session. Make an appointment with the best stylists in Manila:

Basecut Salon, Acropolis (Mac Labay and Chris Cadagat), tel. no. 6870209;

Propaganda, Greenbelt (Jing Monis, Gigi Fuertes), tel. no. 8934098;

Basement Salon, Rockwell Powerplant (Manfred Spiering), tel. no. 8982033;

All products available at PCX; Wellaform is also at leading pharmacies nationwide.

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com

Where cruelty is normal

ANIMAL cruelty is almost considered normal in society. Even the butchering of dogs for meat is done openly. Maltreated and neglected animals are often ignored.

In case you didn't know, there is such a thing as the Animal Welfare Act, Republic Act 8485. Section 6 of this law states: "It shall be unlawful for any person to torture any animal, to neglect to provide adequate care, sustenance or shelter, or maltreat any animals or to subject any dog or horse to dogfights or horsefights, kill or cause or procure to be tortured or deprived of adequate care sustenance or shelter, or maltreat or use the same in research or experiments not expressly authorized by the Committee on Animal welfare."

There are, however, instances when killing is allowed. Such as:

"1. When it is done as part of the religious rituals of an established religion or sect or ritual required by ethnic custom of indigenous cultural communities: however, leaders shall keep records in cooperation with the Committee on Animal Welfare;

"2. When the pet animal is afflicted with an incurable communicable disease as determined and certified by a duly licensed veterinarian;

"3. When the killing is deemed necessary to put an end to the misery suffered by the animal as determined and certified by a duly licensed veterinarian;

"4. When it is done to prevent an imminent danger to the life or limb of a human being; and

"5. When done for the purpose of animal population control;

"6. When an animal is killed after it has been used in authorized research or experiments; and

"7. Any other ground analogous to the foregoing as determined and certified by a licensed veterinarian."

Even then, the killing must be done through humane procedures, such as scientific methods approved by the Committee on Animal Welfare.

We asked 2bU! readers if they thought it was appropriate for the TV show to have filmed and shown the footage.

Of course not! It's against the law and it's wrong to air something that young children may be watching. The treatment of animal cruelty is not taken seriously in this country. I think the best weapon would be education.—**Mica Siquijor, 19**

I don't mind [them airing the segment]. If you can stomach it, show it. I think [the program] is sleazy anyway, and they've shown stuff like the Patricia Javier story. I don't think the country takes animal welfare seriously. I mean, hello, we have 'azucena' *nga eh*! The government can hardly cope with economic problems so I don't think it should waste its time dealing with petty things like animal cruelty.—**Kel Hernandez, 19**

I don't think it was appropriate since kids probably saw it, and that's unhealthy. And besides, isn't the show supposed to be wholesome? But I guess there are just a lot of sick people nowadays. People don't care about animals much anymore. And I don't think the government can do much about it, because people simply don't care.—**Amanda Orosa, 19**

If the dogs are strays, and it gets them off the streets, then so be it, but don't show it on TV! I think that's the only wrong thing there. I think the government ought to make the punishment harsher for R.A. 8485 violators. —**Nikka, 22**

It's kind of stupid to say that they initially wanted to feature a man who owns a snake as a pet. It's not an unusual thing for someone to keep reptiles as pets, and branding him as "extraordinary" just makes it worse. People in this country don't really care about animals, and I have no faith in the government.—**Amy, 18**

No! They didn't have to show that on TV! Sure, they show stuff like snakes eating live animals on Discovery and National Geographic, but that's in the wilds, in the animals' own environment. People don't care about animals anymore... I think what the government should do is implement R.A. 8485.—**Carmela Sison, 20**

I don't think it was proper for them to air the footage, because it was totally unnecessary and sensationalistic. Showing the footage gave the snake's owner the publicity he wanted. It will in all likelihood increase morbid curiosity in his snake and probably lead to even more puppy feedings. I don't think animal cruelty is taken seriously by the majority of Filipinos because we are a culture that considers the dog both a delicacy and a companion. Filipinos simply have other priorities to think about before animal welfare.—**Ian C.**

Such cruelty shouldn't be displayed on TV. It's so sad that in the Philippines cruelty to animals is not taken seriously. I remember last year when FHM featured an article showing a man butchering dogs to be served as a delicacy. It got the ire of dog lovers. Since our government couldn't even take care of its people, I guess it rests on our shoulders that we start the education about treating animals kindly. We see dogs or cats beaten up, left out in the streets, being tied to posts , and maltreated by people. The best our government can do is have a decent animal pound. The media should've been responsible enough not to show off the grisly treatment of animals.—**Delwyn Go**

Maui Reyes

Do you have something to say? E-mail your own opinion to volcanogirl28@hotmail.com

When the cruel media abet animal cruelty

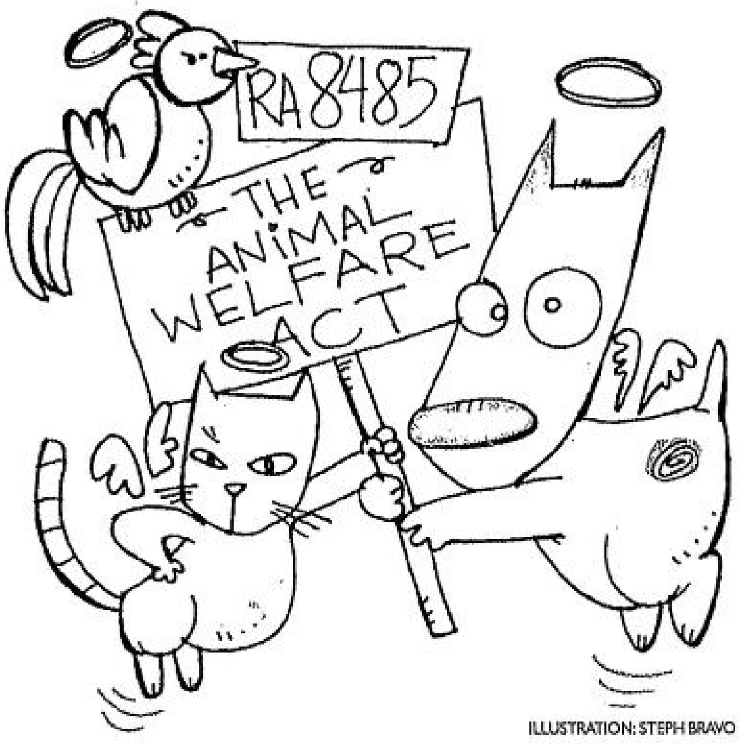

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

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that snakes are bad pets," she said. "He even lets his children play with the snakes, even his youngest child, who is four."

The owner supposedly wished to let people know that snakes make good pets as long as handled well.

"The python was getting weaker, so he looked for a way to keep him alive," the producer said.

It seems like this method of lengthening snakes' lives has become a tourist attraction.

In Albuquerque, Bohol, which is home to many of the country's endangered species like the tarsier, there is a tourist attraction called "Python Paradise" where, not surprisingly, live animals are fed to huge pythons in front of guests for entertainment.

"These people are in provincial areas, so they're not aware that there is such a law," the producer said.

This may be true. Since R.A. 8485 has been issued in 1998, it has been greatly ignored. Most people do not even realize that a law protecting animals exists.

Drawing the line

Hashim-Cabrera believes that featuring the killing on a magazine program only abets cruelty to animals. "It's insensitivity on the part of the network," she said. The producer of the show argued that the teaser showed a clip of a dog put in a cage, and the bamboo stick was used to "uncoil the snake, not to push the dog." She added that the dog wasn't a puppy, but an adult dog.

But does that make any difference? A 2bU! animal enthusiast said, "Why did they have to go all the way to Bohol to film a man who owns a snake? There are many snake-owners in the metro. It's obvious that they just wanted to show a snake that can eat a dog!"

But the producer insisted they had done no wrong. "I am aware of the responsibility that the media has (sic)," she said. "I don't know what's wrong with [the segment]."

Hashim-Cabrera disagreed. "You feed a live dog with terror in his eyes to a snake on national TV, and you don't know what's wrong with it?"

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